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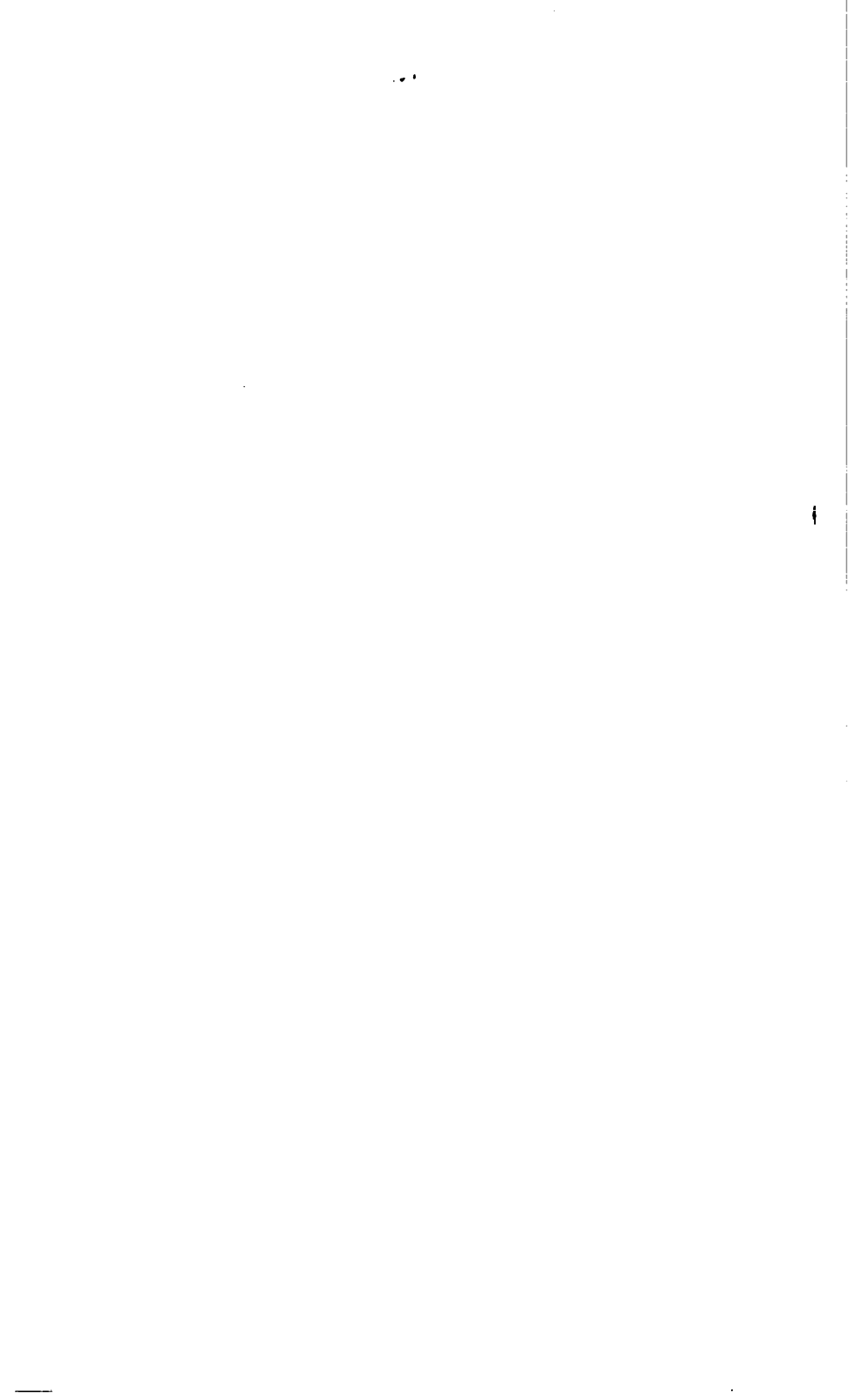
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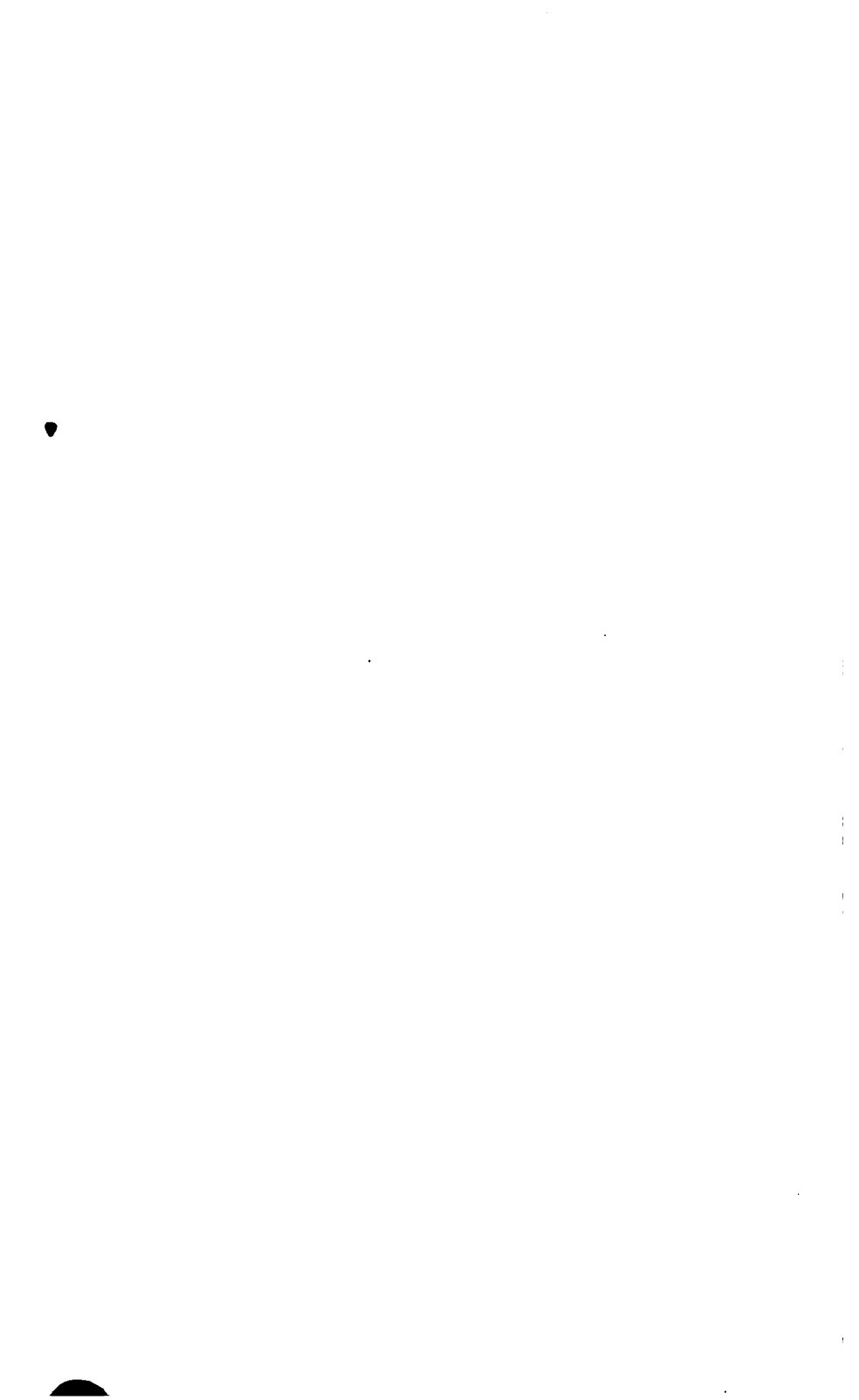
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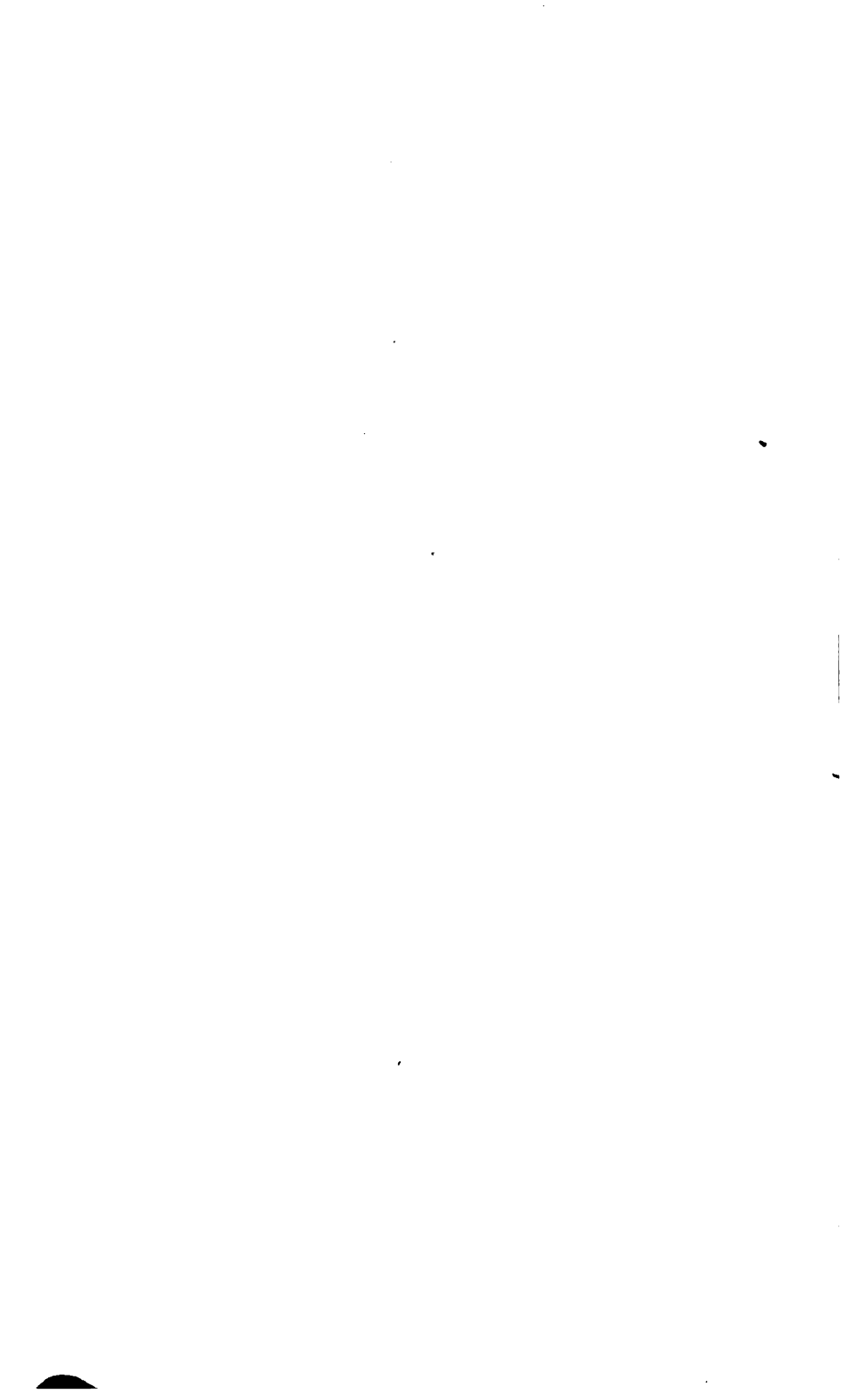


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**RECTORIAL ADDRESSES**  
**DELIVERED BEFORE**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**  
**1859—1899**

EDINBURGH



University of Edinburgh.

# RECTORIAL ADDRESSES

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

1859—1899

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

ARCHIBALD STODART-WALKER, M.B., F.R.C.P.Ed.

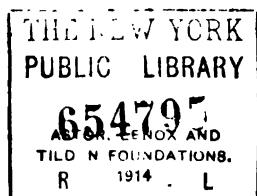
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**EDITOR'S DEDICATION**

**To**

**THE MOST HONOURABLE**

**THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA**

**K.T., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., LL.D., ETC.**

**LORD RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY**

**IN MEMORY OF MUCH KINDNESS**



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## PREFATORY NOTE

*THE Editor desires to express to His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, to the Earl of Rosebery, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Lord Robertson of Forteviot, and Mr. Goschen, his indebtedness for their courteous approval of the publication of their Addresses in the present form. To the Dowager Countess of Iddesleigh as representing the late Earl of Iddesleigh, to Lord Moncreiff as executor of the late Baron, to the executors of the late Mr. Gladstone, and to Sir Thomas Sanderson as representing the Trustees of the late Earl of Derby, he also desires to acknowledge courtesy of a similar nature. To Messrs. William Blackwood and Sons, Chapman and Hall, David Douglas, Longmans, Green and Co., John Murray, the Proprietors of the "Scotsman," and the Editors of "The Student," he has pleasure in acknowledging the opportunity which their generosity afforded him of reprinting the Addresses, according to their several published versions.*

*He takes this opportunity of expressing his indebtedness to Sir Ludovic Grant, Secretary to the Senatus Academicus, and to the Librarians of the University, for much valuable assistance.*



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*Note.*—The Marquis of Lothian, who was unanimously elected Lord Rector on the death of the Earl of Iddealeigh, did not deliver an address. He, however, met the students in a semi-official manner at the opening of the Union in 1889.



# **INTRODUCTION**

**BY**

**ARCHIBALD STODART-WALKER**

**PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, 1889 ;**

**PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY UNION, 1891**



## INTRODUCTION

THE office of Lord Rector, as at present constituted, bears as recent a date as 1858, the Act of that year placing the election of Lord Rector at the disposal of the matriculated students of the University. Before that time the office of Rector, to use the earlier designation, had passed through numerous phases, all of which will be found duly recorded in Sir Alexander Grant's *History of the University*. It is interesting to observe that Andrew Ramsay, the first Rector of the College, who officiated from 1620-26, treated the office as a merely nominal one; an example which had weight with his successor Lord Prestongrange. From 1631 to 1640 the office was in abeyance, in the latter year the principle of an annual election being established. It may be of interest to note the very duties which we find laid down for the Rector's procedure. "1. He was to be the 'Eye of the Town Council,' and the medium of communication between the College and them. 2. He was to see that the Principal and Regent fulfilled their duties. Otherwise he was to report them to the Town Council. 3. He was to arbitrate (under privilege of appeal to the Town Council) upon all disputes arising between members of the College which did not naturally fall to be decided by civil or ecclesiastical courts. 4. He was to keep the matriculation roll and administer *Sponsio Academica* to entrants, and also the Confession of Faith to persons about to graduate. 5. He was to keep a list and honourable record of benefactors. 6. He was to advise the Town Council as to College finances. 7. He was to preside at all ceremonies of College." In addition, we learn from similar sources that "a certain



amount of pomp was to be attached to his person : a silver mace was provided to be carried before him, and one of the students was appointed to be his bedell or macer, with a stipend of £20 (Scots) per annum."

In 1665 the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh was elected Rector *ex officio*, but it was not till some years later, that a formal recognition of his position as such was granted by the officials of the College.

By the Commission of 1826 it was ordained that the Rector should be elected by the *Senatus Academicus* and by the graduates of the University. He was to hold office for seven years, and was "to undertake by acceptance of office to be a working Rector."

But our chief concern is with the office as constituted under the Act of 1858, through which, for the first time, the undergraduate element came to have a distinct voice in the government of the University. By that Act a triennial election was ordained to take place for the office of Lord Rector, who should act as President of the University Court, and who along with an Assessor, chosen by himself, was to represent the matriculated students on the said Court. The first election under the new ordinances took place accordingly in 1859, the two candidates being Mr. Gladstone, at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Charles Neaves, one of the Senators of the College of Justice; with the result that Mr. Gladstone was returned at the head of a poll of 1169 by a majority of 115. The Faculties of Arts and Medicine both gave majorities for the successful candidate, whilst the Faculties of Law and Theology were favourable to Lord Neaves, and it is a tribute to the strong Conservative tendencies of the latter faculty that only one of its members voted for Mr. Gladstone. Since that day the triennial election for the office of Lord Rector has occupied a very considerable place in the affairs of undergraduate life.

In the evolution of election tactics, time has not altered much the procedure of Scottish University Rectorial elections. The outbursts of animal spirits which characterised the early elections are no less evident in those of our later days. In fact, the horseplay and exuberant vigour which one associates

with these elections have long passed from the category of merely accidental circumstances to those of traditions; the whole conduct of the campaign, though ending in spontaneity, originating in a systematised attempt, by both parties, to uphold the traditions of the campaign as laid down by the vigorous example of the early Sixties. Nothing is more remarkable than the change that has come over the general aspect of student life since the Tercentenary of 1884, with the foundation of the Students' Representative Council and the growth of its eldest-born, the University Union. There has settled over the face of that life a reticence and a calmness which would strike dismay into the hearts of those who remember the old Town and Gown riots, and the eloquent outbursts of noise which characterised the many "occasions" at which the students met in assembly. But however much the new environment and the new methods have acted as sedative therapeutics, the old disease, if it may be so called, bursts forth anew every three years, and it is only when a very remarkable change has taken place in human nature, and when there is no longer any belief in the principles of tradition and the respect for association, that there is a likelihood of the election taking place under a stoical calmness. It is no doubt true, that the fact of a political element running through most of the elections, accounts for the remarkable manifestations of enthusiasm which pervade academic circles on the second Saturday of November, once in three years. Since 1874 the elections have been conducted on purely political lines, and only in the case of the contest between Carlyle and Disraeli in 1865 has a literary reputation carried more weight than a political one. Following Carlyle's election in 1865, the political proclivities of the students were again asserted in the election of the Liberal Lord Advocate as opposed to Mr. Ruskin; a partial feeling of a purely academic nature being reverted to in the choice of Sir William Stirling-Maxwell in 1871 in preference to the Liberal Attorney-General in the person of Sir Roundell Palmer, afterwards Lord Selborne. In 1874 the Earl of Derby, whose political evolution found him at different times a person of standing in both the

Conservative and Liberal camps, defeated Sir Lyon Playfair, who only five years before had forsaken his purely academic traditions for the storm and stress of a political career. In 1877 the strong Liberal tendencies of Scotland were reflected in the defeat of Sir Richard Cross by the Marquis of Hartington; and in 1880 even the personal esteem in which Sir Robert Christison was held by the University, added to his reputation as the most brilliant pharmacologist of the day, could not save his defeat at the hands of one who belonged to another school of politics; and the accession of Mr. Gladstone to political power in 1880 was seconded by the installation of his brilliant junior, Lord Rosebery, as Lord Rector of the University. From that day the tide has flown steadily in a Conservative direction, and despite the energetic attacks that have been made by the Liberal party in the person of such doughty champions as Sir George Trevelyan, Sir Lyon Playfair, Sir Charles Russell, Lord Reay, Mr. Haldane, and Mr. Asquith, the University has remained faithful to the Conservative tendency it evinced in the election of Sir Stafford Northcote in 1883, a tendency which was flavoured by a dash of Unionist purple in the election of Lord Dufferin in 1899, when opposed by Mr Asquith, the most Imperialistic of the Liberal Commoners.

On several occasions an attempt was made to conduct the election on purely academic and literary grounds; but if we except the choice of Mr. Carlyle, the attempt has in each case either failed from the inability to secure sufficient support to enable the candidate to be nominated; or on those occasions when the academic and literary enthusiasts have been timorous enough to throw their chances into the stress of an election, the result has only been failure, as was shown in the cases of Mr. Ruskin and Professor Blackie.

It cannot be denied, that the important consideration of the value of the Lord Rector to the students as one of their representatives on the University Court, has to a large extent been lost sight of in the rhetorical and physical possibilities that are exposed to the students in the excitement of an election based on political lines. And we do

not hesitate to suggest the fact that the average student concerns himself little with the practical side of a Lord Rector's duties. No one is naturally keener about his interests than the undergraduate, yet from 1859, when the election of Lord Rector and his Assessor gave him two direct votes on the University Court, to 1893, when the election of Lord Robertson supplied him with a resident Lord Rector, the value of the Lord Rector in continuously watching the interests of his constituents was almost *nil* owing to the practical inability of their Lordships to attend the University Court meetings. Part of the success of Lord Robertson in 1893 was due to the fact that there was a considerable realisation that the Lord Rector is more than a figurehead, with the single duty of delivering an address on installation; but the principle which by Lord Robertson's election almost came to be generally accepted in student circles was lost sight of in the election of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and is now no longer a force, as has been emphasised by the presence on the roll of Lords Rector of that distinguished Irishman, the Marquis of Dufferin.

If the mere question of a Rectorial Address is at issue, without in any way drawing invidious comparisons, the students have in scarcely a single case chosen as their Rector a man of thought in contradistinction to a man of action. In a list of thirteen Lords Rector the names of Thomas Carlyle and Stirling-Maxwell stand out in solitary grandeur as men whose spurs have been won not in the arena of public affairs, but in the more peaceful groves of thought and speculation. The gain to the University of the practical philosophic advice of Lord Advocate Moncreiff does not detract from the thought of what we missed in a literary and ethical sense when the election resulted in the rejection of the author of *The Stones of Venice*. And although the consideration may not be quite appropriate—we at least pray that it may not appear invidious—we cannot but reflect that in a school proud of its scientific traditions there appears on the roll of its Lords Rector not one name famed in the front rank of Science; and there is a certain pathos in recalling the fact that at different

periods of their career two of the greater lights of science, Charles Darwin and Lord Lister, were Edinburgh men, and had claims on the sentiment of the students which no duly-elected Lord Rector possessed, not even excepting the great Carlyle. And if a prophet must succumb to the ancient tradition, there was at least Huxley to fall back upon. Again, it is a pregnant consideration that Edinburgh, the fountainhead of much of the best philosophy of the century, has hesitated in honouring the professed philosophers, and we look in vain for the names of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, George Henry Lewes, or Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. The reply to these considerations, idle they may be, is that of the three qualifications for the Lord Rectorship, that of the importance of a political connection, which in one case is necessary to satisfy the dialectics and the athletics of the student, and in the other to bring the University in close touch with the Government of the country, drives to one side the other two qualifications, that of the ability to deliver an address that might be worthy of the highest traditions of speculation and literature, and that of local residence, which would ensure the uninterrupted presence of two representatives of the students on the University Court.

It would be entirely out of place to essay here any critical estimation of the literary and philosophical value and significance of the various addresses. In another place that would be permissible, but it seems to the present writer that an editor exceeds his moral and literary rights when he attempts to intrude his depreciations (and no criticism or estimation can fail to include a certain amount of depreciation) as it were on the very face of the original manuscript. The sacred grounds of the earth become fewer and fewer as time goes on, traditions grow fainter, the religions of yesterday are the literary curiosities of to-morrow, but the convention of respect which is conveyed in the spirit of the above remarks will not be hurried to its oblivion by him. It is enough to indicate the lines on which the various thinkers have travelled for the consideration of their fitful audiences.

In the addresses of Mr. Gladstone we find reflected again those strongly conservative views on matters of religion and morals which added a not inconsiderable interest to his position as a man of letters. His persistent attachment to what he calls "primeval truths," his belief in a direct providential personal relationship between God and mankind, his clinging to the "impregnable rock of Holy Scripture," his belief that the three-branching family of Noah is the fountainhead of all nations and all peoples, finds expression again in the eloquent periods of these addresses. The point of view of the Great Tribune can be imagined from such passages as the following:—"The Greek life and the Greek mind were the secular counterpart of the Gospel." "All the wonders of the Greek civilisation heaped together are less wonderful than is the single Book of Psalms." "Greece had valour, policy, renown, genius, wisdom, wit,—she had all, in a word, that the world could give her; but the flowers of Paradise, which blossom thinly, blossomed in Palestine alone." But, despite the tendency to focus the essence of Truth in the Christian religion, there is a liberal and eloquent tribute to the Olympian system, and a frank recognition of the moral, intellectual, and artistic grandeur of the Hellenic civilisations. Especially noticeable is his tribute to the "physical morality" (to use Mr. Herbert Spencer's apt phrase) of the Greeks. "It seems to have been an ample recognition of the right of the body to be cared for, and to be reared in its various organs up to the highest excellence it is capable of attaining, as being, what indeed it is, not a mere vesture, or tool, or appendage of the soul, but, like the soul, an integral part of man himself. . . . The Greek saw, as all men see, the body parted from the soul in death, and hastening rapidly, as by the law of its nature, to corruption. To none could this severance, and its mournful and painful incidents, be more repulsive than to him, with his delicate perceptions and his lively emotions. Of a future existence in any shape he usually knew or even surmised little; of the revival of the body, or of the reunion hereafter of the two great factors of the human being, he had yet less conception. We may say then that

he lay under every temptation to a disparaging view of the body and of its office. Yet, in spite of his immense disadvantage, it fell to him to find a place for the body in the philosophy of human nature, and to incorporate the principle thus conceived in laws, usages, and institutions with a clearness and general justness of view, by which Christian learning has done and will yet do well to profit. What with us is somewhat dubious and fluctuating both in theory and in practice, with him was familiar and elementary in both; and the teachers of mental accomplishment taught also the science, if not the art, of bodily excellence."

Of Mr. Carlyle's address, it is only necessary to note that the circumstances connected with it created a red-letter day in the history of University life. Whilst the traditions of Rectorial campaigns and Rectorial addresses carry little that seems worthy of recollection in regard to the manner and circumstances of the occasions on which the addresses were delivered, all who had the fortune to hear the thundering Titan of Ecclefechan seem desirous to place on record their impressions of that memorable occasion. Wrote Sir Alexander Grant, "By reason of old age he was unable to make himself heard throughout the large assembly, but the students sat manifesting the utmost patience and the deepest respect, though hundreds of them were unable to catch his words." "Carlyle at that time," wrote Dr. Hutcheson Stirling, "had just passed his seventieth birthday by some four months, but to my eye he appeared old. He rather shuffled or crippled up between the students, in his place in the procession, than marched or stalked, or even, very precisely to name it, walked. When it was his turn to speak, he rose, threw off his rectorial robes on to his chair with the manifest alacrity of relief, and standing by the corner of the table emptied into a tumbler a small phial (of brandy diluted or undiluted). The coat he then appeared in I have still in my eye as a blue coat with brass buttons. Professor Tyndall seems to speak of it as his old well-known 'brown coat.' That is not my recollection, and certainly, to my mind, it quite suits the relative Carlyle ideas as to date and fashion that

only such gala garment would be the proper one on such gala occasion. The room was, of course, crowded to the utmost, and there was all the enthusiasm that has been commemorated. But after some time the whole place had a very peculiar aspect. Below and in front of the speaker there was a crescent of auditors, three or four rows deep; behind these were scattered individuals standing up on the ends of empty benches; while farther behind again were scattered infrequent groups, standing conversing, or going away conversing; for it was only those who were directly close to the speaker whom what was said reached. To those who did not articulately hear, there was only a somewhat peaked old face, with a flushed cheek, and a raised hectic, almost apprehensive-like eye, that wagged or oscillated a constant *wa-wa*."

It was eminently characteristic of the growing blackness of Carlyle's outlook on life in his later days that he should write in the following strain about this memorable occasion:—"Monday, at Edinburgh, was to me the gloomiest chaotic day, nearly intolerable for confusion, crowding, noisy inanity, and miserable, till once I got done. My speech was delivered as in a mood of defiant despair and under the pressure of nightmares. Some feeling that I was not speaking lies sustained me. The applause, etc., I took for empty noise, which it really was not altogether. The instant I found myself loose, I hurried joyfully out of it. . . . To the students, all crowding and shouting round me, I waved my hand prohibitively at the door, perhaps lifted my hat; and they gave but one cheer more; something in the tone of *it* which did for the first time go into my heart. Poor young men! so well affected to the poor old brother or grandfather; and in such a black whirlpool of a world were all of us!" And again, "The 'recent return of popularity greater than ever' which I hear of seems due alone to that Edinburgh 'address,' and affords new proof of the singularly dark and feeble condition of 'public judgment' at this time. No idea or shadow of an idea in that address but what had been set forth by me tens of times before, and the poor gaping sea of Prurient



Blockheadism receives it as a kind of inspired revelation and runs to buy my books (it is said) now when I have got quite done with their buying or refusing to buy."

But we prefer to find the true balance of the whole matter in these words of Dr. Richard Garnett. "In November 1865 Carlyle received the only public honour accepted by him from his own country. He was elected Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh in succession to Mr. Gladstone, and by a large majority over Disraeli. He is not wise who disdains such an honour, if it be true that the fate of every country lies in the hands of its citizens under five-and-twenty. Carlyle certainly did not, for all his disparaging talk. He would not else have faced the very trying ordeal of his public address, which, as the day of inauguration approached, became a nightmare to him." He wrote to many friends, including Professor Blackie, to help him "with this affair of an address." "Carlyle's own account of his visit to Edinburgh, written afterwards in his mood of desolation, when the pen was dropping from his weary hand, is denounced by Professor Masson as 'a dull and dismalised blur of the facts and circumstances.' This view is entirely borne out by Mr. Moncure Conway, who immediately after the delivery of Carlyle's address 'saw his countenance, as I had never seen it before, without any trace of spiritual pain.' Strange had it been otherwise; he had seen the proudest day of his life; students and grey-haired men gathered at his feet; listening as he spoke 'slowly, connectedly, nobly,' 'like children held by a tale of wonderland.' His discourse was like his own deep eye, which, the reporter says, sometimes beat like a pulse, but for the most part looked merely sedate and kindly. With an occasional flash of eloquence, but in general with the composure of one who knew that his work had been weighed in the balance and not found wanting, he talked to the crowd of young men—such a crowd as those of which in old time he had himself formed a portion; a crowd which, for aught he knew, might conceal another Carlyle. . . . When all was said the students

thronged around him, some shedding tears — ominous, prophetic tears.”

The occasion in Mr. Carlyle's eyes was not one for an essay, and the Sage was content to speak without notes and without, it may be added, much definite sequence, on many of the subjects dear to his heart—typical of the general tendency of his teaching. Some of his opening words have a pathos of their own. “It is now fifty-six years, gone last November, since I first entered your City, a boy of not quite fourteen; to ‘attend the classes’ here, and gain knowledge of all kinds, I could little guess what, my poor mind full of wonder and awe-struck expectation; and now, after a long course, this is what we have come to. There is something touching and tragic, and yet at the same time beautiful, to see, as it were, the third generation of my dear old native land rising up and saying, ‘Well, you are not altogether an unworthy labourer in the vineyard; you have toiled through a great variety of fortunes, and have had many judges: this is our judgment of you!’ As the old proverb says, ‘He that builds by the wayside has many masters.’ We must expect a variety of judges; but the voice of young Scotland, through you, is really of some value to me; and I return you many thanks for it—though I cannot go into describing my emotions to you, and perhaps they will be much more perfectly conceivable if expressed in silence.” In a letter written some time after the delivery of this address Carlyle takes further occasion to put on record the value he set on the spontaneous tribute of the Edinburgh students. “With a fine youthful enthusiasm, beautiful to look upon, they bestowed on me that bit of honour, loyally all they had; and it has now, for reasons one and another, become touchingly memorable to me,—touchingly and even grandly and tragically,—never to be forgotten for the remainder of my life. Bid them, in my name, if they still love me, fight the good fight, and quit themselves like men, in the warfare to which *they* are as if conscript and consecrated, and which lies ahead. Tell them to consult the eternal oracles (not yet inaudible, nor ever to become so, when worthily inquired of); and to disregard, nearly

altogether, in comparison, the temporary noises, menacings, and deliriums. May they love Wisdom, as Wisdom, if she is to yield her treasures, must be loved,—piously, valiantly, humbly, beyond life itself or the prizes of life, with all one's heart, and all one's soul:—in that case (I will say again), and not in any other case, it shall be well with them."

The address itself is full of the gospels of strength, of reverence, and of silence. Of strength, as personified in men of the stamp of Oliver Cromwell and John Knox; of reverence as exemplified by Goethe in his analogy of the three reverences; of silence with such texts as the following, "There was no public speaking then, no reporting of speeches, and no babble of any kind, there was just the business in hand." "Silence withal is the eternal duty of man. He won't get to any real understanding of what is complex, and what is more than aught else, pertinent to his interests, without keeping silence too." The gospel of silence has made him suspicious of the mere orator. "An excellent speaker of that kind is, as it were, saying, 'Ho, every one that wants to be persuaded of the thing that is not true; here is the man for you!'"

And in the following paragraph do we not get a foretaste of that gospel of true perspective preached so eloquently by George Meredith, at a later period, in his *Essay on the Spirit of Comedy*? Said Carlyle, "It is a curious thing, which I remarked long ago, and have often turned in my head, that the old word for 'holy' in the Teutonic languages, *heilig*, also means 'healthy.' Thus *Heilbronn* means indifferently 'holy-well' or 'health-well.' We have in the Scots, too, 'hale,' and its derivatives; and, I suppose, our English word 'whole' (with a 'w'), all of one piece, without any *hole* in it, is the same word. I find that you could not get any better definition of what 'holy' really is than 'healthy.' Completely healthy; *mens sana in corpore sano*. A man all lucid and in equilibrium. His intellect a clear mirror geometrically plane, brilliantly sensitive to all objects and impressions made on it, and imaging all things in their correct proportions; not twisted up into convex or concave, and distorting everything, so

that he cannot see the truth of the matter without endless groping and manipulation: healthy, clear, and free, and discerning truly all round him. We never can attain that at all. In fact, the operations we have got into are destructive of it. You cannot, if you are going to do any decisive intellectual operation that will last a long while; if, for instance, you are going to write a book,—you cannot manage it (at least, I never could) without getting decidedly made ill by it: and really one nevertheless must; if it is your business, you are obliged to follow out what you are at, and to do it, if even at the expense of health. Only remember, at all times, to get back as fast as possible out of it into health; and regard that as the real equilibrium and centre of things. You should always look at the *heilig*, which means ‘holy’ as well as ‘healthy.’”

The address of Carlyle’s successor, Moncreiff, at that time Lord Advocate, opens with a glowing tribute to his predecessor’s character, and proceeds to draw a subtle yet picturesque impression of Scottish student life, and of the “the pleased but wondering consciousness of liberty, of power, and of responsibility which fills the young heart now with exultation, and then with a tinge of solemnity.” And the truth of the following is not to be contested. “There is nothing one can meet with in life which appears so grave, so experienced, so self-convinced, so thoroughly

The wisest, virtuouslest, discreetest, best,

as one sometimes meets with in a man fresh from College. Time and vexatious experience, it is true, make him younger every day; but there is something attractive to me in his honest dogmatism” (we wonder what Mr. Carlyle would have had to say to this?). “His confidence in himself has been fairly earned in honourable conflict with his fellows. His opinions, although they seem and are preternaturally mature, have been sublimated in the fine crucible of truth, unalloyed by the baser elements of self-interest, or of party, sectarian, or sordid influences.”

In the address will be found a very graphic picture of the general condition of the literary, political, and social

atmosphere of the early part of the century, and a judicious tribute to the methods of the Scottish Universities, besides much other speculation and reflection which testifies to the virile sanity of one of the most brilliant of our latter-day jurists. In the generous breadth of its treatment, in the glow of its enthusiasm, and in the reverence of its appreciations, it seems to stand, by our present standard, almost the most attractive and valuable of the whole series of Rectorial Addresses.

The address of Sir William Stirling-Maxwell was unfortunately made the occasion of a demonstration of hostility on the part of the students which prevented it from being more than partially heard. For the explanation of this procedure let us quote Sir Alexander Grant. "It so happened that when Sir William Stirling-Maxwell came to Edinburgh in 1872 to address the students, the student world was in a state of considerable excitement about the question of admitting women to medical degrees. A number of those who had voted for Sir William determined to ascertain the sentiments on this point of their new Lord Rector, so they met him at the railway station and expressed to him their hope that he would not, as President of the University Court, favour the pretensions of the literary ladies. Sir William Stirling-Maxwell was in truth not at all disposed to do so, but he very naturally declined to give the students any pledge as to the course which he might take. The reply was very improperly interpreted to mean an espousal of the women's cause, and was resented accordingly. A section of the students (and a very small minority is sufficient for such a purpose) went to Sir William's address not to listen but to interrupt, and thus a graceful and charming oration was rendered inaudible by barbarous noises, and was finally broken off amid confusion, as has happened too often on other occasions—where even the poor motive of this disturbance was wanting—in the Universities of Scotland."

It follows, then, that we are in a position of advantage over the revengeful audience of that day, in that we can study the address without a thought of anything but the

sustained wisdom of one of the great thinkers of the last generation. The address is worthy of note, if only for the fact that before an academic audience not at all sympathetic to innovations which would permit a free invasion of the female element into University life, Sir William was fearless enough to boldly assert his belief in the efficacy of holding nothing from the teaching curriculum of women. There are, however, other fields to which the speaker brings his point of view. The importance of a classical training, the study of contemporary records as the only true method of grasping the true spirit of the age, the value of a cool and hesitating judgment, are all advocated in terms of wise reserve yet definite belief.

Of the deliverance of Lord Derby, it is only necessary to note that in no other address is there a freer eclectic spirit, nowhere else do we find what may be called the scientific point of view more clearly discerned. The address might have been written by Huxley. "To the ignorant man England is the world; the nineteenth century represents all time. To the student who has lived in the life of many countries and many ages, human existence is too complex to be embodied in any formula. He thinks of the disappointed expectations and the unfulfilled predictions which are the staple of history. He remembers how many burning questions have grown cold; how many immortal principles have not survived their authors; how small a space the great social or political problems of a few centuries ago take up in the records of our race; and he learns a lesson of wise and not unkindly scepticism. Napoleon predicting that within fifty years Europe would be either Republican or Cossack; Canning calling the South American Republics into existence, to redress the balance of the Old World; the French thinkers of the last century believing in the immediate downfall of what they called superstition; philanthropists, even in our own time, announcing that the great European wars had become out of date and impossible."

In almost everything Lord Derby represents the spirit of the speculative modern. He pays high tribute to the sacredness of science and scientific research. He is no

upholder of academic monopolies, but advocates with spirit the claims of extramuralism.

One cannot pass from the address without noting his Lordship's liking for aphorism and for the epigrammatic. "Those who possess few ideas are apt to be possessed by them." "Many a man has died for a phrase he did not understand." "Ideas are good servants but bad masters." "Many a man having got hold of what may possibly be a truth, has regarded it ever after as *the* truth."

To Lord Hartington's address we turn for a very noble tribute to the value of Scottish learning in the readjustment of the national point of view in the early part of the century. "Adam Smith, in your sister University of Glasgow, and Robertson here, may be said to have founded that school of philosophical and practical politicians, which by strenuous efforts in the direction of liberty, triumphed finally over the legacy of prejudice which Great Britain had inherited from the French Revolution." Lord Hartington then proceeds to pass a eulogy on Dugald Stewart, "the greatest exciter of young minds since the days of Abélard in Paris," at whose feet "sat some of the most distinguished statesmen and politicians of the last generation," and to whom Lord Jeffrey, Francis Horner, and Henry Cockburn "owed their souls." And while dwelling on the philosophical significance of certain teachers, and on the qualities which go to the production of the good citizen, he does not forget to join in the unison of advice as to the inordinate value of undergraduate days in creating the proper atmosphere for intellectual work, and laying the proper foundation of method on which the superstructure of other days is to be reared. "It is here that you have the only leisure which will ever be yours during your lives. It is here that you have time and opportunity to form opinions, and to grasp a firm hold of principles. Hereafter, when the hurry and struggle of life begins, it will be much if the principles so grasped are strong enough to help you to resist the sacrifice of opinions to the demands of what appears to be expediency."

Lord Rosebery did not travel far to find a subject for his eloquence. To a Scotsman the subject of Patriotism ever

lends itself to new phases of expression, despite the fact that it has been a favourite theme of all those honoured in arms, in arts, in song. Lord Rosebery at the very outset reminded his hearers of its necessary limitations and of the traps that men have been led into by the platitudes associated with its name. "In the first place, allow me to remark that there is no word so prostituted as patriotism. It is part of the base coinage of controversy. Every Government fails in it, and every Opposition glows with it. It dictates silence and speech, action and inaction, interference and abstention, with unvarying force and facility. It smiles impartially on the acceptance and the resignation of office; it impels people to enter and to quit public life with equal reason and equal precipitation. It urges to heroism, to self-sacrifice, to assassination, and to incendiarism. It built Jerusalem and burned Moscow. It stabbed Marat, and put his bones in the Pantheon. It was the watchword of the Reign of Terror, and the motto of the guillotine. It raises statues to the people whom it lodges in dungeons. It patronises almost every crime and every virtue in history."

Despite the dangers of defining a virtue that has been so viciously treated, Lord Rosebery faces the question, and submits that "Patriotism is the self-respect of race," and all that follows in the elaboration of the subject supports Bolingbroke's contention that Patriotism must be founded in great principles and supported by great virtues. We cannot, however, follow Lord Rosebery into his analysis of, and his disquisition on, this subject, which lies at the very basis of national welfare. We do not, however, resist the temptation of selecting some of the more concentrated expressions of his Lordship's point of view. "In an empire obliteration is not harmony, nor monotony union." "The noblest race is a generous mixture of great races." "Sentiment has its power, and, like other gases, it requires cautious dealing." "How many old spinsters of ideas have we suddenly seen developed into queenly brides!" "Wherever a Scotsman goes he is taken as the sample of his race." "Vanity is a centipede with corns on every foot." And some Scotsmen perhaps are not undeserving of the hint which



the following wise paragraph suggests : "What we need is not the passive recollection of the past, though the past should never be forgotten ; it is not the mere utterance of time-honoured shibboleths, though we need not disdain these either ; it is not the constituting the plaid a wedding garment, without which none is welcome, though we may love the tartan well enough ;—it was not thus that Scotland was made, nor is it thus that she can be maintained. The spirit that I will not say we need—for it exists, but the spirit that we wish to see developed is an intelligent pride in this country of ours, and an anxiety to make it one way or another, by every means in our power, more and more worthy of our pride. Let us win in the competition of international wellbeing and prosperity. . . . The dream of him who loved Scotland best would lie not so much in the direction of antiquarian revival as in the hope that his country might be pointed out as one that in spite of rocks, and rigour, and poverty, could yet teach the world by precept and example, could lead the van and point the moral, where greater nations and fairer states had failed."

Of quite a different nature are the addresses of Lord Iddesleigh. The latter of the two is the only one of the series that is strictly devoted to the consideration of a method of obtaining information. The address is not the disquisition of a hard-headed metaphysician, nor the predilections of a speculative politician, it has its charm in seeming to be the holiday task of a cultured English gentleman of catholic tastes. It does not attempt dogmatic generalisation, nor is it oppressed by the weight of its own philosophical importance, yet in many ways it lays claim to a literary flavour that has not been attempted in any of the other addresses. And it is not the flavour of the literary *flaneur*, nor the careful prospected method of the professional stylist, but the flavour and style of the writer who, though not professing letters, has often stepped aside from the open way of life to find rest in the sheltered nooks where poets and dreamers dwell.

As for the desultory reader, his advocacy certainly claims for him a position higher than convention has allowed. "His must be no mere fingering of books without thought

how they are to be turned to account. He may be wise in not allowing himself to become a bookworm; but he must take care not to become what is much worse, a book-butterfly." Nevertheless, Lord Iddesleigh is anxious that we should acquire some skill in the arts of dipping and skipping.

The address concludes with some lines by Professor Blackie:—

Rocking on a lazy billow  
With roaming eyes,  
Cushioned on a dreamy pillow,  
Thou art not wise;  
Wake the power within thee sleeping,  
Trim the plot that's in thy keeping;  
Thou wilt bless the task when reaping  
Sweet labour's prize.

It was characteristic of a Northcote to pay a graceful compliment to a defeated opponent.

Mr. Goschen's scholarly contribution, dealing with "The Use of Imagination in Study and in Life," is in every sense a sustained philosophical disquisition, and is full of the ripe wisdom of the academic thinker turned practical politician. By the exercise of the faculty of wise, sympathetic, disciplined, prospective imagination we are to test and correct the lessons of historical experience. Imagination is, in fact, to be the true leveller, by its use the true perspective of life is to be reached, by its power we are to give to life its colour, its tone, and its charm.

"Give me a historian who can make us feel as if the men and women of ancient times were moving in bodily shape before our eyes, surrounded by the circumstances of their own day, obedient to the standard of feeling and duty under which they were brought up, not speaking the language of to-day, nor influenced by motives which were foreign to their time,—and I shall feel that he is educating me more thoroughly in the science of history than if he had given me any amount of tabulated information, any record of simple transactions, any acute analysis of individual character." That is the historian with a constructive imagination viewing life retrospectively.

Mr. Goschen also applies imagination in the ploy of

constructive politics, in the fields even of academic economics, into the very museum of biology. As for physics: "When I think of your fellow-countryman, Sir William Thomson,<sup>1</sup> engaged on atoms and molecules, piercing the secrets of the smallest entities, brooding over the mystic dance of ethereal vortices, while his magic wand summons elemental forces to reveal the nature of their powers to his scientific gaze, I forget the disciplined accuracy of the man of science, while lost in wonder at the imaginative inspiration of the poet."

And most important of all in the region of practical politics. "Large issues of state policy or of social economy will . . . be submitted to you in the discharge of your duties as citizens. On these questions above all exercise your faculty of transporting yourselves mentally to the point of view of your opponents; on these questions above all bring a trained prospective imagination to bear. In the conflicts of classes, in the struggles of parties, the habit and the power of realising the standpoint of both sides is scarcely less important for the success of any cause of which you may be the champions than the firm belief in the truth of your own convictions."

Two distinctions marked the election of the Lord Justice General as Lord Rector. He was the first Lord Rector whose residence was in the metropolitan area, and he had "the gracious fortune to be the first Rector elected by a constituency not confined to the darker sex." In his address on "The Duty of Educated Intellect to the State," the dominant desire is towards wisdom, and the dominant note struck throughout is that pre-eminently of what the ancients would call a wise man. There is no running riot in idolatries, there is no "drifting into vanities." "It is the balanced mind, the candid disposition, the educated view, that perceives the relations of things, that is alive to analogies and not innocent of irony, that does not expect to find all things in categories, and all black or white, that is reverent to what is great and disaffected to what is smug." In these, Lord Robertson's own words, we find some image of the speaker himself, as he shows himself in this address.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Kelvin.

The rest we leave to posterity. There is much magnanimity, which, says Lord Robertson, "is the crown and flower of all education"; there is much sound reason; there is most of all the central star in the crown of learning—common-sense; there is a hatred of the high-sounding terms of second-class demagogues, "Equality, which is merely Privilege with a red cap on!"

And in conclusion there is evinced the insight which gave the speaker these words, "Do not suppose me insensible to the pathos of this gathering"; and those whose imagination can soar above the merely physical demonstrations of a mass of graduates, can see behind these gleanings of culture, the vast yearnings, the deadening fears, the upward strivings, the irresponsible recklessness, the still tragedies which go to make up the pathos of student life.

"University Training and National Character" supplies Lord Balfour of Burleigh with plenty of scope for much fine material for his virile address, which for the present must count as the last word spoken from the Rectorial chair. There is a touch of manly diffidence of the man of action in his approach to the critical spirit of the youthful academe. "My life and experience have lain in the engrossing round of public business, pressed in by the imperious necessity of studying affairs in the concrete, which is so apt to blind us to the purer light of science, of learning, and of that abstract truth which shines with a calm serenity, too often banished from the daily experience of a practical life."

But that calm serenity is but an artificial mask if it cannot view unmoved the storm and stress of actual affairs, and the purer lights he speaks of are only pure in so far as they have found their origin in the stern realities of natural struggle. The days are long past, we hope, when the academic spirit was merely another name for ironbound formalism and theoretical pedantry. Lord Balfour, in fact, grasped the true meaning of University position when he said, "The Universities are really shrines, which the slow-working wisdom of the nation, and the long experience of centuries, have established to be the guiding lights of intellectual progress, and to be the centres of our highest

intellectual endeavours. . . . Every civilised nation has formed such shrines, bridging over the space between the discipline of the school and the battlefield which lies before you in active life on the other side of the stream."

Perhaps the pity of it is, that so few realise the importance of this University life until it is passed. It may be that the definite framing of the realisation into ideas or words is not necessary, and that the influence of a University environment, however indefinitely grasped and appreciated at the time, never fails in its developing and shaping character. It is a truism that no influence is definitely lost, but no influence can have full scope to produce its best energies without that selecting consciousness which is the sign of the true searcher after Truth. Many are cast from the childish ethical standpoint and the simple directness of school life, into the complicated intellectualism and complex moral atmosphere of a University, without any real preparation beyond the vague direction of those in domestic authority. We used to hold the view that every man should start his University life with a course of lectures on the first principles of the career on which he was to embark, in which course would be pointed out in clear perspective the view before him; that view to embrace not only a superficial regard of his own particular "shop," but also of the various side issues of a social and moral nature with which he as a citizen of the world is concerned. This is no Utopian idea, dreamt of in nooks far away from practical experience, it springs from a firm conviction that most men go through their professional curricula living from day to day, and stumbling on from point to point without very definite principles, without a clear conception of the country through which they are travelling. What is wanted is an academic compass. It is only in after days that one realises the amount of waste ground that has been trod over, the amount of energy that has been expended in useless struggles to obtain we know not clearly what.

The present volume might not unsuitably form one of the text-books for this initial class in the academic cur-

riculum. The accumulated wisdom that it contains, the points of view of statesmen, philosophers, practical men of the world, ought to be more than mere bread cast upon the waters with the promise of being found after many days. We are no great believers in grandmotherly legislation, in vague and impertinent attempts at domineering altruism. No one resents platitudinal advice flung in his face as much as a student does, but no one values more the presentation of rational inferences drawn from experience, and especially when they come from those it has been his especial delight to honour.

If we have reminded our fellow-students (for, however long we have ceased to be undergraduates, we are still faithful children of our Alma Mater) that there is much in this volume that they will not regret reading, even at the very threshold of their University career, our task has not been in vain. In the springtime, "at the golden gates of morning," impressions sink deep, deeper far than when our moral hides are tanned and thickened by the buffetings of a hundred intellectual and moral storms. In that early summer then, that man cannot call himself poor who is called to arms by the rousing voice of Carlyle, to whom reverence is preached by the golden tongue of Gladstone, whose duty to his country is recalled by Lord Rosebery, and his various duties to himself and his University defined by other men famed in the arena of public life.

The University has been called a "great unsympathetic machine." It may be that the absence of sympathy has hardened the aspiring young of the race, and made them hard-faced and hard-souled for the struggle for existence. It is not for us to decide on this question, but if sympathy is needed it can be taken from those who have written and spoken in words which are not, we believe, mere attempts at academic rhetoric, but come sincerely and simply from man to man, and must ever remain as beacon lights in the wilderness of academic strivings. And for a peroration let us take the last words of Carlyle's address—a kind of marching music of man-kind, done into English verse from Goethe:—

The Future hides in it  
Gladness and sorrow ;  
We press still thorow,  
Nought that abides in it  
Daunting us,—onward.

And solemn before us,  
Veiled, the dark Portal ;  
Goal of all mortal :—  
Stars silent rest o'er us,  
Graves under us silent !

While earnest thou gazest,  
Comes boding of terror,  
Comes phantasm and error ;  
Perplexes the bravest  
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the Voices,  
Heard are the Sages,  
The Worlds and the Ages :  
“Choose well ; your choice is  
Brief, and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you,  
In Eternity's stillness ;  
Here is all fulness,  
Ye brave, to reward you ;  
Work, and despair not.”

ARCHIBALD STODART-WALKER

ADDRESS

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE  
M.P., D.C.L., LL.D.  
LORD RECTOR

1860





PRINCIPAL, PROFESSORS, AND STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH—I cannot estimate lightly the occasion on which I meet you, especially as it regards the younger and the larger part of my academical audience. The franchise which you have exercised in my favour is itself of a nature to draw attention ; for the Legislature of our own day has, by a new deliberative Act, invested you, the youngest members of the University, with a definite and not inconsiderable influence in the formation of that Court, which is to exercise, upon appeal, the highest control over its proceedings. This is a measure which would hardly have been adopted in any other land than our own. Yet it is also one, in the best sense, agreeable to the spirit of our country and of its institutions ; for we think it eminently British to admit the voice of the governed in the choice of governors—to seek, through diversity of elements, for harmony and unity of result, and to train men for the discharge of manly duties by letting them begin their exercise betimes.

You have chosen, gentlemen, as your own representative in the University Court, one widely enough separated from you in the scale of years ; one to whom much of that is past, which to you is as yet future. It is fitting, then, that he should speak to you on such an occasion as that which unites us together—namely, the work of the University, as a great organ of preparation for after life ; and that, in treating of what constitutes the great bond between us, he should desire and endeavour to assist in arming you, as far as he may, for the efforts and trials of your career.

Subject to certain cycles of partial revolution, it is true that, as in the material so in the moral world, every genera-

tion of man is a labourer for that which succeeds it, and makes an addition to that great sum-total of achieved results, which may, in commercial phrase, be called the capital of the race. Of all the conditions of existence in which man differs from the brutes, there is not one of greater moment than this, that each one of them commences life as if he were the first of a species, whereas man inherits largely from those who have gone before. How largely, none of us can say; but my belief is that, as years gather more and more upon you, you will estimate more and more highly your debt to preceding ages. If, on the one hand, that debt is capable of being exaggerated or misapprehended, —if arguments are sometimes strangely used which would imply that, because they have done much, we ought to do nothing more; yet, on the other hand, it is no less true that the obligation is one so vast and manifold that it can never as a whole be adequately measured. It is not only in possessions, available for use, enjoyment, and security; it is not only in language, laws, institutions, arts, religion; it is not only in what we have, but in what we are. For, as character is formed by the action and reaction of the human being and the circumstances in which he lives, it follows that, as those circumstances vary, he alters too, and he transmits a modified—it ought to be also an enlarged and expanding—nature onwards in his turn to his posterity, under that mysterious law which establishes between every generation and its predecessors a moral as well as a physical association.

In what degree this process is marred, on the one hand, by the perversity and by the infirmity of man, or restored and extended, on the other, by the remedial provisions of the Divine mercy, this is not the place to inquire. The progress of mankind is, upon the whole, a chequered and an intercepted progress; and even where it is full formed, still, just as in the individual, youth has charms that maturity under an inexorable law must lose, so the earlier ages of the world will ever continue to delight and instruct us by beauties that are exclusively or peculiarly their own. Again, it would seem as though this progress (and here is a chastening and a humbling thought) were a progress of mankind,

and not of the individual man; for it seems to be quite clear that whatever be the comparative greatness of the race now and in its infant or early stages, what may be called the normal specimens, so far as they have been made known to us, either through external form or through the works of the intellect, have tended rather to dwindle—or at least to diminish, than to grow in the highest elements of greatness.

But the exceptions at which these remarks have glanced, neither destroy nor materially weaken the profound moment of the broad and universal canon, that every generation of men, as they traverse the vale of life, are bound to accumulate, and in divers manners do accumulate, new treasures for the race, and leave the world richer, on their departure, for the advantage of their descendants, than, on their entrance, they themselves had found it. Of the mental portion of this treasure no small part is stored—and of the continuous work I have described no small part is performed—by Universities; which have been, I venture to say, entitled to rank among the greater lights and glories of Christendom.

It is, I believe, a fact, and if so, it is a fact highly instructive and suggestive, that the University, as such, is a Christian institution. The Greeks, indeed, had the very largest ideas upon the training of man, and produced specimens of our kind with gifts that have never been surpassed. But the nature of man, such as they knew it, was scarcely at all developed, nay, it was maimed, in its supreme capacity—in its relations towards God. Hence, as in the visions of the prophet, so upon the roll of history, the imposing fabrics of ancient civilisation never have endured. Greece has bequeathed to us her ever-living tongue, and the immortal productions of her intellect. Rome made ready for Christendom the elements of polity and law; but the brilliant assemblage of endowments, which constitutes civilisation, having no root in itself, could not brook the shocks of time and vicissitude; it came and it went; it was seen and it was gone: *Hunc tantum terris ostendent fata; neque ultra esse sinent.*

We now watch, gentlemen, with a trembling hope, the course of that later and Christian civilisation which arose out of the ashes of the old heathen world, and ask ourselves whether, like the Gospel itself, so that which the Gospel has wrought beyond itself in the manners, arts, laws, and institutions of men, is in such manner and degree salted with perpetual life, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it? Will the civilisation, which was springing upwards from the days of Charlemagne, and which now, over the face of Europe and America, seems to present to us in bewildering conflict the mingled signs of decrepitude and of vigour, perish like its older types, and, like them, be known thereafter only in its fragments; or does it bear a charmed life, and will it give shade from the heat and shelter from the storm to all generations of man?

In any answer to such a question, it would perhaps be easier to say what would not than what would be involved. But some things we may observe, which may be among the materials of a reply. The arts of war are now so allied with those of peace, that barbarism, once so terrible, is reduced to physical impotence; and what civilised man has had the wit to create, he has also the strength to defend. Thus one grand destructive agency is paralysed. Time, indeed, is the great destroyer; but his power, too, is greatly neutralised by printing, by commerce which lays the foundations of friendship among nations, by the ease of communication which binds men together, by that diffusion of intelligence which multiplies the natural guardians of civilisation. These are perhaps not merely isolated phenomena. Perhaps they are but witnesses, and but a few among many witnesses, to the vast change which has been wrought since the advent of our Lord in the state of man. Perhaps they re-echo to us the truth that, apart from sound and sure relations to its Maker, the fitful efforts of mankind must needs be worsted in the conflict with chance and change; but that, when by the dispensation of Christianity the order of our moral nature was restored, when the rightful King had once more taken His place upon His throne, then, indeed, civilisation might come to have a meaning and a vitality

such as had before been denied it. Then, at length, it had obtained the key to all the mysteries of the nature of man, to all the anomalies of its condition. Then it had obtained the ground-plan of that nature in all its fulness, which before had been known only in remnants or in fragments; fragments of which, even as now in the toppling remains of some ancient church or castle, the true grandeur and the ethereal beauty were even the more conspicuous because of the surrounding ruins. But fragments still, and fragments only, until, by the bringing of life and immortality to light, the parts of our nature were reunited, its harmony was re-established, the riddle of life, heretofore unsolved, was at length read as a discipline, and so obtained its just interpretation. All that had before seemed idle conflict, wasted energy, barren effort, was seen to be but the preparation for a glorious future; and death itself, instead of extinguishing the last hopes of man, became the means and the pledge of his perfection.

It was surely meet that a religion aiming at so much on our behalf should, in its historical development, provide an apparatus of subsidiary means for the attainment of its noble end far beyond what man in earlier days had dreamed of. To some of the particular organs formed in this apparatus for carrying man upwards and onwards to the source of his being, I have already adverted. Read in the light of these ideas, the appearance of the University among the great institutions of Christian civilisation is a phenomenon of no common interest. Let us see whether, itself among the historical results of Christianity, it does not vindicate its origin, and repay, so to speak, the debt of its birth, by the service that it renders to the great work of human cultivation.

I do not enter, gentlemen, into the question from what source the University etymologically derives its name. At the very least, it is a name most aptly symbolising the purpose for which the thing itself exists. For the work of the University as such covers the whole field of knowledge human and divine; the whole field of our nature in all its powers; the whole field of time, in binding together suc-

cessive generations as they pass in the prosecution of their common destiny; aiding each to sow its proper seed and to reap its proper harvest from what has been sown before; storing up into its own treasure-house the spoils of every new venture in the domain of mental enterprise, and ever binding the present to pay over to the future an acknowledgment at least of the debt which for itself it owes the past. If the work of improvement in human society under Christian influences be a continuous and progressive work, then we can well conceive why the King's daughter, foreshadowed in Holy Writ, has counted the University among her handmaids. If, apart from what may be the counsels of Providence as to ultimate success, it lay essentially in the nature of Christianity that it should aim at nothing less than the entire regeneration of human nature and society, such a conception as that of the University was surely her appropriate ally. Think as we will upon the movement of man's life and the course of his destiny, there is a fit association, and a noble and lofty harmony, between the greatest gift of the Almighty to our race, on the one hand, and the subordinate but momentous ministries of those chief institutions of learning and education, the business of one among which has gathered us to-day.

The idea of the University, as we find it historically presented to us in the middle age, was to methodise, perpetuate, and apply all knowledge which existed, and to adopt and take up into itself every new branch as it came successively into existence. These various kinds of knowledge were applied for the various uses of life, such as the time apprehended them. But the great truth was always held, and always kept in the centre of the system, that man himself is the crowning wonder of creation; that the study of his nature is the noblest study that the world affords; and that, to his advancement and improvement, all undertakings, all professions, all arts, all knowledge, all institutions are subordinated, as means and instruments to their end.

The old and established principle was that the University had its base in the Faculty of Arts: *Universitas fundata*

*est in artibus.* It was not meant by this maxim that the Faculty of Arts was to have precedence over all other faculties, for this honour was naturally and justly accorded to Theology; both, we may suppose, because of the dignity of its subject-matter, which well may place it at the head of all human knowledge, and because it was, so to speak, in possession of the ground, and in the exercise of very powerful influence, at the period when the less organised institutions for teaching began to develop themselves into their final form of Universities. But the University was founded in the principle of universal culture, and the name Arts was intended to embrace every description of knowledge that, rising above mere handicraft, could contribute to train the mind and faculties of man. To say, then, that the University was founded in Arts, was to assert the universality of its work. The assertion was not less true, nor less far-sighted, because those who first made it may not have been conscious of its comprehending more than the studies of the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, which included grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. This catalogue is indeed a brief one, as compared with the countless branches of modern study; yet within its narrow bounds it contains in principle, at the least, the philosophy of speech, the philosophy of the mind, the mathematical sciences, pure and mixed, and the Fine Arts. It is both more easy and more rational, all circumstances taken into view, to admire the vastness of the conception of the University, than to wonder that it was at first but partially unfolded and applied.

The sincerity, the sagacity, the energy of purpose, with which the old Universities were designed and organised may be discerned, as in other ways, so by the progressive expansion of their studies. The Roman law, after remaining long almost forgotten, became known anew to Europe; and, as it grew to be a study, the Universities provided for it with their faculty of laws; and with those degrees, Principal and Professors, which call this day for my grateful appreciation. \Again, when the final triumph of barbarism at Constantinople compelled Greek learning to seek a home in



the west, provision began to be made forthwith in Universities for its reception. I think my distinguished brother, if I may presume so to call him (Professor Mansell), could tell us that one of the first of those foundations was made in the very College at Oxford which he himself adorns. And the study, of which Greek learning is the main and most fruitful as well as the most arduous part, made its way under the well-deserved name of Humanity, to the very head of the Faculty of Arts. When in all physical science man, guided in no small degree by our own illustrious Bacon, became content (in Bacon's language) to acknowledge himself only the servant and interpreter of Nature, and to walk in the paths of patient observation, the ground was laid first for that Faculty of Medicine, which has attained in the University of Edinburgh to a distinction destined, I hope, to be as long-lived as it is without doubt extraordinary. We can hardly expect that human institutions should, without limit of time, retain the flexible and elastic tissues of their youth: and Universities in particular, as they have grown old and great, have come to interlace at many points with the interests and concerns of that outer world which has but little sympathy with their proper work: or they might have displayed at this day an organisation as complete, relatively to the present state of knowledge and inquiry, as was that which they possessed some centuries ago. The older history of the Universities of Europe not only presents many features of the utmost interest, but upon the whole inspires satisfaction and challenges praise from the impartial observer.

I might detain you long, gentlemen, upon the various kinds of good they did, and I might search long without discovering any characteristic evils to set down against it. What the castle was to the feudal baron, what the guild was to the infant middle-class, they were to knowledge and to mental freedom; nor was it only that from them local culture received local shelter, and enjoyed through them an immunity from the assaults of barbarism in its vicinity: they established, so to speak, a telegraph for the mind; and all the elements of intellectual culture scattered throughout

Europe were brought by them into near communion. Without a visible head, or a coercive law, or a perilous tendency to aggression, they did for the mind of man what the unity of the Roman Church aimed at doing for his soul. They did it by the strong sympathy of an inward life, and by a common interest and impulse, almost from their nature incapable of being directed to perverse or dangerous ends. Indeed, it was not in their nature to supply the materials of any combination formidable to other social powers acting each in its proper sphere, for they were on every side watched by jealous interests, and kept at once in check and in activity by competition. The monasteries for the Church, and the legal and medical professions with their special establishments of education, as they were matured in after times, prevented an undue ascendancy; while in these seats alone there was supplied that good preservative against excess and disorder, that human knowledge was in them regarded as a whole, and its various branches had, from their very neighbourhood, better definitions of their proper provinces, and of their mutual relations. In whatever light we view them, there was a completeness in the idea and work of Universities, in proportion as their proper development was attained, which may well excite our wonder. They aimed alike, as we have seen, at the preservation of all old learning, and at the appropriation of all new. They bound themselves to prosecute alike those studies which fit men for the professions and the daily needs of life, and those which terminate upon man himself, whether by the investigation of truth or by the pursuit of refinement. They bore, and indeed they still bear, a character at once conservative and progressive. If not uniformly, yet in general, their influence tended to mitigate extreme opinions: the Papal power, for example, knew no more formidable curb than the great University of Paris, and in England it was the special privilege of Oxford to rear up many centuries ago very eminent men of the class who have been well described by a German writer as Reformers before the Reformation. I speak now of men of action; but in both of the Universities I have named—and they are, I think,

the two placed by Huber at the head of all the northern Universities—there were also reared many men of the first order in power of thought, who discussed even the highest subjects with a freedom as well as a force much beyond what has been tolerated in the Latin Church since the alarm and shock of the Reformation. Of all these, the best-known name to modern ears is Abelard; for it is associated with a romantic tale of passion, which some, and even some famous, writers have not thought it beneath them to degrade. But quite apart from the profound and sad interest, and the warning lessons of his history, he was a man that gave to the human mind one of those enduring impulses whose effects remain long after their source has been forgotten, and influence the course of thought, and through thought, of action, after many generations.

Universities were, in truth, a great mediating power between the high and the low, between the old and the new, between speculation and action, between authority and freedom. Of these last words, in their application to the political sphere, modern history, and the experience of our own time, afford abundant exemplification. In countries which enjoy political liberty, the Universities are usually firm supports of the established order of things; but in countries under absolute government they acquire a bias towards innovation. Some excess may be noted in these tendencies, but in the main they bear witness against greater and more pernicious excesses. To take instances—the University of Edinburgh did not very easily accommodate itself to the Revolution of 1688; it was long in the eighteenth century before Cambridge returned Whig representatives to Parliament; and I believe the very latest of the Jacobite risings and riots occurred in Oxford. On the other hand, in some continental countries it has been the practice during the present century, when the political horizon threatened, at once to close the Universities as the probable centres of agitation,—a proceeding so strange, according to our ideas and experience, that the fact may sound hardly credible; and within the last few weeks we may all have seen notices in the public journals of move-

ments in the University of Rome itself adverse to the Pontifical Government.

It is in itself deeply interesting, and it should augment our thankfulness for the ample liberties we now enjoy, to trace them back to their cradle. At one time we find nobles ; at another, country gentlemen ; at another, burgesses, engaged in the struggle against arbitrary power ; but nowhere in the ancient history of this country is more deeply engraven her unconquerable love of freedom than in the constitution and history of her Universities. Each of them, as a brotherhood, bound together by the noble bond of learning, was a standing and living protest against the domination of mere wealth and of force in all their forms ; and they strengthened themselves for their conflict by the freedom of their arrangements, both of teaching and of discipline. As respects teaching, I neither define nor dispute the changes that the altered conditions of modern society may have required ; but I think there is no doubt, that in proportion as we can give a just freedom to teaching by introducing into it the element of a wholesome competition, do we approach more closely to the primitive spirit and system of Universities. As to discipline, we may read the aversion of our forefathers to all slavish formalism in the personal freedom which has been allowed to students—in that curious distribution of them into Nations, which appears to have aimed at a system of self-government combined with pupilage—in the occasional dangers, sometimes for the moment serious enough, to the public peace, which occurred from time to time ; and lastly, let me say, in those suffrages which have so long been enjoyed in Scotland, and which have been extended to you under the authority of Parliament. It is indeed a fashion with some to ridicule that method of disputation which was used for testing talents and acquirements. I demur to the propriety of the proceeding. It might be as just to ridicule the clumsiness of their weapons or their tools. These disputations were clumsy weapons ; but the question after all is, how did the men use them ? Let us confess, the defect was more than made good by the zeal with which in those times learning

was pursued; their true test is in the capacity and vigour which they gave to the mind, and this trial they can well abide.

The sketch which I have endeavoured to give, though longer than I could wish, yet, touching as it does a subject of vast and varied interest, is, I admit, both slight and general, and would require much adaptation in detail to make it exactly suit each case. But it is essentially a picture of the past. *Jam nova progenies coelo demittitur alto.* The simple forms into which society was cast at the time when Universities were equal to their work, have given place to a more extended and elaborate organisation, with greatly multiplied wants; and the very same state of society which now makes immensely enlarged demands on its establishments of learning and education, has likewise reduced the means of supplying them; for those prizes of talent and energy, and those opportunities of attaining even to colossal fortune, with which the outer walks of life now abound, have bid down the modest emoluments which science and learning offer within the precincts of Universities, have altered the prevailing tone of mind with respect to knowledge, and have disposed the overwhelming mass of those who seek for education, to seek it not for its own sake, but for the sake simply of its bearing on the professions and pursuits of life.

Amidst a warm glow of reverence, gratitude, and attachment, there is discontent with the existing Universities, and a sense that they do not perform all their work. Part of this discontent is exacting and unreasonable; another part of it is justified by a comparison of the means which all or some of them possess with their performances, and ought to be met and to be removed. But besides the two forms of discontent I have named, there is a third, which is neither irrational like the first, nor yet remediable like the second. There must always be, especially in the most luminous and the most energetic minds, a sense of deficiency which we may properly call discontent in regard to the shortcomings of Universities when they are put to the test of measurement beside the abstract and lofty standard supplied by

their conception, their aim, and their older history. The truth is, that that standard is one which it surpasses human wit to reach, especially in a period marked, as is this of ours, by a restless activity of the human spirit. For let us remember that it is the proper work of Universities, could they but perform it, while they guard and cultivate all ancient truth, to keep themselves in the foremost ranks of modern discovery, to harmonise continually the inherited with the acquired wealth of mankind, and to give a charter to freedom of discussion, while they maintain the reasonable limits of the domain of tradition and of authority.

The question how far endowments for education are to be desired is beset with peculiar difficulty. Where they are small and remote from public observation, they tend rapidly to torpor. They are admirable where they come in aid of a good-will already existing, but where the good-will does not exist beforehand, they are as likely to stifle as to stimulate its growth. They make a high cultivation accessible to the youth who desires it, and who could not otherwise attain his worthy and noble end; on the other hand, they remove the spur by which Providence neutralises the indolence of man, and moves him to supply his wants. If the teacher, when unendowed, may be constrained to forego all high training for students, and to provide only for their lower and more immediate demands; on the other hand, the teacher, when endowed, and in so far as he is endowed, is deprived of the aid which personal interest and private necessities can lend to the sense of duty, and he may be tempted to neglect or to minister but feebly to the culture of his pupils, either in its higher or in its lower sense.

And it is never to be forgotten, that amidst all the kinds of exertion incident to our human state, there is none more arduous, none more exhausting, than the work of teaching worthily performed. Some men, indeed, possess in this department a princely gift, which operates like a charm upon the young, and they follow such an one as soldiers follow their leader when he waves the banner of their native land before their eyes. But such men are rare; they are not less rare than are great men in any other walk of life.

Speaking generally, the work of teaching is, even when pursued with the whole heart, even when felt to be an absorbing work, but moderately successful; while he who teaches with half his heart does not really teach at all.

There are, however, considerations which tell on the other side. The solidity of establishments founded on old endowments supplies a basis on which there are gradually formed a mass of continuous traditions, always powerful and generally noble; and the very name of them, as it is handed on from generation to generation, becomes a watchword at once of affectionate remembrances and of lofty aspirations. They lay hold of the young by those properties which are the finest characteristics of youth; and in our happy country the boy, when he is enrolled as a member of one of these institutions, feels that he is admitted to a share in a great inheritance, and instinctively burns to be worthy of the badge he has assumed.

Again, in a country which, like this, is both free and wealthy, all endowed institutions are open to the competition of the unendowed, and few establishments are so amply endowed as not to leave room for the operation on the teacher of those ordinary motives which prompt him to better his condition. This remark is eminently applicable to the Universities in Scotland.

It is indeed alleged, and I think with truth, that the ancient Universities of England, with their magnificent endowments, do not effect so much as they ought on behalf of either education or of learning; with the spirit of improvement which now rules in them, and with the powerful aid which the Legislature has given for the more free and efficacious use of their property, I believe that they will both further enlarge their field and plough it more deeply. But when all has been done that we can reasonably hope, the results will still seem small when compared with those produced in other times and in other countries; they will still give rise to disappointment.

Let it not, on that account, be concluded that it would be well to strip these great and ancient foundations of their trappings. The real merits, the real performances of Uni-

versities, cannot be fairly judged except by fairly measuring the strength of the competing power, that of the outer world, in all its busy spheres. The fact that a hundred pounds will not bring as much learning in England, or even in Scotland, as in Germany, is no more conclusive of this case than the fact that neither will the same sum buy as many eggs; not because eggs are more scarce, but because money is more abundant.

It may be, though I will not presume to assert positively it is, that the endowments of learning in our own country do but redress, and that partially, the relative disadvantage at which, but for them, learning itself must have been placed by the increased attractions and multiplied openings which the exterior spheres of modern life supply. This, however, we all must feel, that now is the time when it befits every teacher and every student connected with all these great and venerable institutions, to bestir himself, and to refute, at least in his own person, the charge that endowment gravitates towards torpor as its natural consummation, if indeed we desire that in a critical though not an unkindly age the Universities should still enjoy that intelligent respect which has been paid them by so many generations. I have been assuming all along that all Universities are united by a paramount bond of common interest, and I have therefore discussed them at large. If now we contract our view to the Universities of Scotland—if again we bring it yet nearer home, and look at Edinburgh alone, we have the consolation of thinking that Envy herself can scarcely charge either the whole of them, or this one in particular, with an abuse of wealth.

In the history of the University of Edinburgh, we may clearly trace the national character of Scotland—we find there all that hardy energy, that gift of extracting much from little, and husbanding every available provision—of supplying the defects of external appliances and means from within by the augmented effort and courage of man, that power to make an ungenial climate smile, and a hungry soil teem with all the bounties of Providence, which have given to Scotland a place and a name among men so far beyond



what was due to her geographical extent or to her natural resources. The progress of this University during the last century—I strive to speak impartially—is truly wonderful: from the days of Carstairs, Pitcairn, Monro, and Sibbald, at its beginning, to those of Brown and Stewart, of Robertson and Blair, of Cullen, the second Monro, of Black, of Playfair, of Robison, of Sir William Hamilton, and many others both before and since its close.

It would be most unjust in any review of the fortunes of this University not to notice that great peculiarity in its condition—its subjection to the local municipal authority. I speak, gentlemen, of what history tells. I have stated that it is the business of Universities to give a charter to freedom of discussion; and I am sure you will allow me to say that, without prejudice, this is the impression that a perusal of the ancient history of Edinburgh makes on my mind. In lieu of sovereigns, and great nobles and prelates, for patrons, visitors, Chancellors, and the like, the University of Edinburgh, as a general rule, could look no farther and no higher than to the Council of the “good town” itself. A relation, originally intended for a great secondary school, survived that stage of the career of the institution, and continued to influence its affairs, when it was to all intents and purposes a University; and I must say, that the history of this relation appears to be highly honourable to all parties concerned. On the side of the teaching body we commonly find deference and trust. On the side of the superintending corporation, in generations gone by—for the present is not within the sphere of my discussion—we find patronage effectively and intelligently exercised, and the most assiduous and friendly care bestowed in improving and enlarging the organisation. I speak with the freedom of historical inquiry and with chartered freedom of discussion before an academic audience: modern times do not fall within my province: but I must say, in looking to the past, that it will indeed be easier for the Town Council of our own day, in the discharge of the large and important share of governing duties that are still lodged in its hands, to fall below than to rise above the level of those who preceded it in the critical

times preceding and following the Legislative Union. And now, my younger friends, you to whom I owe the distinction of the office which enables and requires me to address you, if I have dwelt thus at length upon the character and scope of Universities, and their place in the scheme of Christian civilisation, it is in order that, setting before you the dignity that belongs to them, and that is reflected on their members, and the great opportunities which they offer, both of advancement and of improvement, I might chiefly suggest and impress by facts, which may be more eloquent than precepts, the responsibilities that are laid upon you by the enjoyment of these gifts and blessings.

Much, however, might be said to you on the acquisition of the knowledge which will be directly serviceable to you in your several professions. Much on the immense value of that kind of training, in which the subjects learned have for their chief aim not to inure the hand (so to speak) to the use of its tools in some particular art, but to operate on the mind itself, and, by making it flexible, manifold, and strong, to endow it with a general aptitude for the duties and exigencies of life. Much, lastly, on the frame of mind in which you should pursue your work. Of these three branches, the topics belonging to the first are the most obvious and simple, for it requires no argument to persuade the workman, that he must be duly furnished with his tools, and must know how to handle them.

The reasons are less directly palpable which have made it the habit of our country to spend, where means permit, many precious years upon studies void in a great degree of immediate bearing upon the intended occupations of our after life. There may, however, be the means of showing first, that even the direct uses of the studies which you include under the general designation of humanity, are more considerable, when they are collected into one view, than might have been supposed; and secondly, that the most distinguished professional men bear witness with an overwhelming authority, in favour of a course of education in which to train the mind shall be the first object, and to stock it, the second.

Man is to be trained chiefly by studying and by knowing man ; and we are prepared for knowing man in life by learning him first in books, much as we are taught to draw from drawings before we draw from nature. But if man is to be studied in books, he will best be studied in such books as present him to us in the largest, strongest, simplest, in a word, the most typical forms. These forms are principally found among the ancients.

Nor can the study of the ancients be dissociated from the study of their languages. There is a profound relation between thought and the investiture which it chooses for itself ; and it is, as a general rule, most true, that we cannot know men or nations unless we know their tongue.

Diversity of language was, like labour, a temporal penalty inflicted on our race for sin ; but being, like labour, originally penal, like labour it becomes, by the ordinance of God, a fertile source of blessing to those who use it aright. It is the instrument of thought, but it is not a blind or dead instrument ; it is like the works in metal that Dædalus and Vulcan were fabled to produce ; and even as the limping deity was supported in his walk by his nymphs of so-called brass, in like manner language reacts upon and bears up the thoughts from which it springs, and comes to take rank among the most effective powers for the discipline of the mind.

But more important than the quest of professional knowledge, more vital than the most effective intellectual training, is the remaining question of the temper and aim with which the youth prosecutes his work.

It is my privilege to be the first who has ever thus addressed you in the capacity of Rector. But without doubt your ears have caught the echo of those affectionate and weighty counsels which the most eminent men of the age have not thought it beneath them to address to the students of a sister Scottish University. Let me remind you how one of European fame, who is now your and my academical superior, how the great jurist, orator, philosopher, and legislator, who is our Chancellor, how Lord Brougham besought the youth of Glasgow, as I in his words would more feebly,

but not less earnestly, pray you, "to believe how incomparably the present season is verily and indeed the most precious of your whole lives," and how "every hour you squander here will," in other days, "rise up against you, and be paid for by years of bitter but unavailing regrets." Let me recall to you how another Lord Rector of Glasgow, whose name is cherished in every cottage of his country, and whose strong sagacity, vast range of experience, and energy of will were not one whit more eminent than the tenderness of his conscience, and his ever wakeful and wearing sense of public duty—let me recall to you how Sir Robert Peel, choosing from his quiver with a congenial forethought that shaft which was most likely to strike home, averred before the same academic audience what may as safely be declared to you, that "there is a presumption, amounting almost to certainty, that if any one of you will determine to be eminent in whatever profession you may choose, and will act with unvarying steadiness in pursuance of that determination, you will, if health and strength be given to you, infallibly succeed." The mountain tops of Scotland behold on every side of them the witness, and many a one of what were once her morasses and her moorlands, now blossoming as the rose, carries on its face the proof, that it is in man and not in his circumstances that the secret of his destiny resides. For most of you that destiny will take its final bent towards evil or towards good, not from the information you imbibe, but from the habits of mind, thought, and life that you shall acquire, during your academical career. Could you with the bodily eye see the moments of it as they fly, you would see them all pass by you, as the bee that has rifled the heather bears its honey through the air, charged with the promise, or it may be with the menace, of the future. In many things it is wise to believe before experience—until you may know; and believe me when I tell you that the thrift of time will repay you in after life with an usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams, and that the waste of it will make you dwindle, alike in intellectual and in moral stature, beyond your darkest reckonings.

I am Scotchman enough to know that among you there are always many who are already, even in their tender years, fighting with a mature and manful courage the battle of life. When they feel themselves lonely amidst the crowd, when they are for a moment disheartened by that Difficulty which is the rude and rocking cradle of every kind of excellence—when they are conscious of the pinch of poverty and self-denial, let them be conscious, too, that a sleepless Eye is watching them from above, that their honest efforts are assisted, their humble prayers are heard, and all things are working together for their good. Is not this the life of faith, which walks by your side from your rising in the morning to your lying down at night—which lights up for you the cheerless world, and transfigures all that you encounter, whatever be its outward form, with hues brought down from heaven?

These considerations are applicable to all of you. You are all in training here for educated life, for the higher forms of mental experience, for circles limited perhaps, but yet circles of social influence and leadership. Some of you may be chosen to greater distinctions and heavier trials, and may enter into that class of which each member while he lives is envied or admired:—

And when he dies he leaves a lofty name,  
A light, a landmark, on the cliffs of fame.

And, gentlemen, the hope of an enduring fame is without doubt a powerful incentive to virtuous action, and you may suffer it to float before you as a vision of refreshment, second always and second in the long interval to your conscience and the will of God. For an enduring fame is one stamped by the judgment of the future, that future which dispels illusions, and smashes idols into dust. Little of what is criminal, little of what is idle, can endure even the first touch of the ordeal; it seems as though this purging power, following at the heels of man and trying his work, were a witness and a harbinger of the great and final account.

So then the thirst of an enduring fame is near akin to

the love of true excellence. But the fame of the moment is a dangerous possession and a bastard motive; and he who does his acts in order that the echo of them may come back as a soft music in his ears, plays false to his noble destiny as a Christian man, places himself in continual danger of dallying with wrong, and taints even his virtuous actions at their source. Not the sublime words alone of the Son of God and His apostles, but heathenism too, even while its vision is limited to the passing scene, testifies with an hundred tongues that the passing scene itself presents to us virtue as an object, and a moral law, graven deeply in our whole nature, as a guide. But now, when the screens that so bounded human vision have been removed, it were sad indeed, and not more sad than shameful, if that being should be content to live for the opinion of the moment, who has immortality for his inheritance. He that never dies, can he not afford to wait patiently a while? And can he not let Faith, which interprets the present, also guarantee the future? Nor are there any two habits of mind more distinct than that which chooses success for its aim and covets after popularity, and that, on the other hand, which values and defers to the judgments of our fellow-men as helps in the attainment of truth.

But I would not confound with the sordid worship of popularity in after life, the graceful and instinctive love of praise in the uncritical period of youth. On the contrary, I say, avail yourselves of that stimulus to good deeds, and when it proceeds from worthy sources and lights upon worthy conduct, yield yourselves to the warm satisfaction it inspires; but yet, even while young, and even amidst the glow of that delight, keep a vigilant eye upon yourselves, refer the honour to Him from whom all honour comes, and ever be inwardly ashamed for not being worthier of His gifts.

But, gentlemen, if you let yourselves enjoy the praise of your teachers, let me beseech you to repay their care, and to help their arduous work, by entering into it with them, and by showing that you meet their exertions neither with a churlish mistrust nor with a passive indifference, but with free and ready gratitude. Rely upon it, they require

your sympathy; and they require it more in proportion as they are worthy of their work. The faithful and able teacher, says an old adage, is *in loco parentis*. His charge certainly resembles the mother's care in this, that, if he be devoted to his task, you can measure neither the cost to him of the efforts which he makes, nor the debt of gratitude you owe him. The great poet of Italy—the profound and lofty Dante—had had for an instructor one<sup>1</sup> whom, for a miserable vice, his poem places in the regions of the damned; and yet this lord of song—this prophet of all the knowledge of his time—this master of every gift that can adorn the human mind—when in those dreary regions he sees the known image of his tutor, avows in language of a magnificence all his own, that he cannot, even now, withhold his sympathy and sorrow from his unhappy teacher, for he recollects how, in the upper world, with a father's tender care, that teacher had pointed to him the way by which man becomes immortal.

Gentlemen, I have detained you long. Perhaps I have not had time to be brief; certainly I could have wished for much larger opportunities of maturing and verifying what I have addressed to you upon subjects which have always possessed a hold on my heart, and have long had public and palpable claims on my attention. Such as I have, I give. And now, finally, in bidding you farewell, let me invoke every blessing upon your venerable University in its new career; upon the youth by whom its halls are gladdened, and upon the distinguished Head and able teachers by whom its places of authority are adorned.

<sup>1</sup> Brunetto Latini.

Se fosse tutto pieno 'l mio dimando,  
Risposi io lui, voi non sareste ancora  
Dell' umana natura posto in bando;  
Chè in la mente m' è fitta, ed or m' accora  
La cara e buona imagine paterna  
Di voi, quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora  
Mi 'nsegnavate come l' uom s' eterna.

*Inferno*, xv. 79.

**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE  
M.P., D.C.L., LL.D.**

**LORD RECTOR**

**"ON THE PLACE OF ANCIENT GREECE IN THE  
PROVIDENTIAL ORDER OF THE WORLD."**

**NOV. 3, 1865**





MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROFESSORS, AND GENTLEMEN—The subject on which I desire to address to you my parting words is, the place of ancient Greece in the providential order of the world.

Even the pointed announcement of such a subject may seem to partake of paradox. No one, indeed, would think of denying that the people, who inhabited that little cluster of rugged mountains and of narrow vales, played a part, and a great part, upon the stage of history, and left a mark, not deep only, but indelible, upon the character of the human race. No one would deny that they have delivered to us brilliant examples of energy in action, and matchless productions of the mind and hand, models in letters and in art. Nor is there any doubt about the fact, that Christian Europe has during many generations assigned to Greece the largest share in the cultivation of the human mind. But this age, which questions much, questions naturally enough the propriety of the judgment, which has thus awarded her the place of honour in the career of general education. Her language, her history, her literature, and her art are regarded as the privileged delight and separate entertainment of the few; but there is no clear perception in the majority of minds, that all these have entered deeply into the common interests of mankind. Lastly, they are distinguished in so broad a manner from the teaching of the Gospel, nay in certain points and instances they are so much in conflict with the spirit of the Evangelical code, that there is a disposition to regard them as belonging exclusively to the secular order, as well as to the secondary, and if I may so speak ornamental, interests of life. To its secondary

interests, because Greece does not propose to teach us how to choose a profession, or to make way in the world :—

τί δέ μ' ὠφελήσουσ' οἱ ῥυθμοὶ πρὸς τὰ λφίτα ;<sup>1</sup>

To the secular order, because it is beyond doubt that we cannot obtain from her the lessons of true religion. Nay, she has sometimes almost assumed the attitude of its rival : for both the period of the revival of learning, and also more modern times, have supplied signal instances, in which her fascinations have well-nigh persuaded men of genius or of letters, Christian-born, to desert their allegiance to their faith, and endeavour to revive for themselves, at least in the region of the fancy, the worship once in use at her long-abandoned shrines.

Other reasons besides these have produced a practical indisposition to regard ancient Greece as having had a distinct, assignable, and most important place in the providential government of the world. Something that may be called religionism, rather than religion, has led us for the most part not indeed to deny in terms that God has been and is the God and Father and Governor of the whole human race, as well as of Jews and Christians, yet to think and act as if His providential eye and care had been confined in ancient times to the narrow valley of Jerusalem, and since the Advent to the Christian pale, or even to something which, enforcing some yet narrower limitation at our own arbitrary will, we think, fit to call such. But surely He, who cared for the sixscore thousand persons in ancient Nineveh that could not distinguish between their right hand and their left, He, without whom not a sparrow falls, He that shapes, in its minutest detail, even the inanimate world, and clothes the lily of the field with its beauty and its grace, He never forgot those sheep of His in the wilderness, but as, on the one hand, He solicited them, and bore witness to them of Himself, by never-ceasing bounty and by the law written in their hearts, so on the other hand in unseen modes He used them, as He is always using us, for either the willing, or if not the willing, then the

<sup>1</sup> Aristoph. *Neph.* 648.

unconscious or unwilling, furtherance and accomplishment of His designs. The real paradox then would be not to assert, but to deny or even to overlook, the part which may have been assigned to any race, and especially to a race of such unrivalled gifts, in that great and all-embracing plan for the rearing and training of the human children of our Father in heaven, which we call the Providential Government of the world.

Such preparation, ascertained and established upon the solid ground of fact, may be termed prophecy in action ; and is, if possible, yet stronger for the confirmation of belief, and yet more sublime in aspect as an illustration of Almighty greatness, than prophecy in word.

But in this Providential government there are diversities of operations. In this great house<sup>1</sup> there are vessels of gold and silver, vessels of wood and earth. In the sphere of common experience we see some human beings live and die, and furnish by their life no special lessons visible to man, but only that general teaching, in elementary and simple forms, which is derivable from every particle of human experience. Others there have been who, from the time when their young lives first, as it were, peeped over the horizon, seemed at once to

Flame in the forehead of the morning sky ;<sup>2</sup>

whose lengthening years have been but one growing splendour, and at the last who

leave a lofty name,  
A light, a landmark, on the cliffs of fame.<sup>3</sup>

Now, it is not in the general, the ordinary, the elementary way, but it is in a high and special sense, that I claim for ancient Greece a marked, appropriated, distinctive place in the Providential order of the world. And I will set about explaining what I mean.

I presume that all philosophy, claiming to be Christian, regards the history of our race, from its earliest records down to the Incarnation and Advent of our Lord, as a

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Lycidas.

<sup>3</sup> Moore.

preparation for that transcendent event, on which were to be hung thereafter the destinies of our race.

Let us, however, examine more particularly that opinion which has prevailed in the world, sometimes sustained by argument, oftener by sufferance, sometimes lurking underground, and sometimes emboldened to assert itself in the face of day, that although the Divine care extends in a general way to all men, yet we are to look for this preparation, at least for the positive parts of it, nowhere except in the pages of the Old Testament, and in the history and traditions of the Patriarchs and the Jews. This opinion has what some of our fathers would have termed "a face of piety"; it has undoubtedly been held by pious persons, and urged in what are termed the interests of religion. But that face I am persuaded is a face only, a mask which ought to be stripped off, as it hides the reality from our view.

According to this theory, we are to consider the line of the patriarchs and the descendants of Abraham as exclusively the objects of any Divine dispensation which, operating in the times before the Advent, is to be reckoned as part of the preparation for the great event. To them we are to look as the guardians of all human excellence in all its infinite varieties; and when we seem to find it elsewhere, we are either to treat the phenomenon as spurious, or else, believing without sight, we are to consider it as derived, through some hidden channel, from the stores communicated by Divine revelation to the favoured race. This theory found perhaps its fullest, nay even its most properly fanatical, development in the *Paradise Regained* of Milton. There the works of the Greek intellect and imagination are depreciated in a strain of the utmost extravagance; and, what is worse, the extravagance is made to proceed from those Divine lips, all whose words were weighed and measured in the exactest balances and lines of truth. First, the proposition is advanced by the poet that divine inspiration precludes the need of any other knowledge, even "though granted true"; "but these," so proceeds the speech—

But these are false, or little else but dreams,  
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.

The Greek philosophers are dismissed, as a body, with wholesale condemnation: while Homer and the tragedians are stated, with a gravity in itself wonderful enough, to have learned the art of poetry from the Jews:—

All our law and story strewed  
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscribed,  
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon  
That pleased so well our victors' ear, declare  
That rather Greece from us these arts derived.

The orators are set to compete with the Hebrew prophets:—

Herein to our prophets far beneath  
As men divinely taught, and better teaching  
The solid rules of civil government.<sup>1</sup>

A competition this, which would probably have caused the greatest astonishment to those to whom the prize in it is awarded.

It is difficult to understand how Milton's genius could have prompted him thus to pit against one another things really, in the main, incommensurable; or how his learning, which must have made him acquainted with the Greek philosophy, could have failed to impress him with the belief that men like Aristotle and Plato were earnest seekers after truth.

Warburton observes upon these passages, that they were in accordance with the fashion of the time. And it appears that, especially in the later years of Milton's life, there were a number of learned men, English and foreign, such as Bochart, Huet, Voss, Gale, and Bogan, who busied themselves in showing correspondences between the Hebrew and the Pagan traditions, and who in some instances, particularly that of Huet, Bishop of Avranches, pushed their undertaking into undue and fanciful detail. But I have not found that they propounded any doctrine in reference to the derivation of heathen literature from Jewish sources, either to the sweeping extent, or in the cynical spirit, of the *Paradise Regained*. Their object appears to have been a different one, namely, to fortify the historical credit of

<sup>1</sup> *Paradise Regained*, Book iv. 291, 334, 356,

the sacred records by tracing elsewhere matter essentially corresponding with their contents ; either as clothed in contemporary disguises, or as flowing from a common fountain-head.

In truth, the seed-plot of this peculiar learning belongs to a much earlier and a more interesting and important literature. Paganism, which had been for the two greatest races of the ancient world in their infancy a creed, and in their riper age a profession, did not, when assailed by the victorious advance of Christianity, retire from the intellectual battle-field without a desperate struggle, carried on in its behalf with all the resources of powerful and subtle intellects. As a revelation of the designs of God for the recovery and moral renovation of mankind, the Gospel was not unfairly required to give an account, not only of itself, but of everything else in the world that preceded or opposed it. The Pagan system, if it had nothing else, had at least one important advantage in the controversy. It represented a continuous unbroken tradition, dating from beyond the memory of man : it had come down from father to son through more than a hundred generations with an ostensible sameness and a very widely extended sway ; and none could name the day when, in the two far-famed peninsulas that had given the breath of life to the ancient world, it did not exist and prevail.

Under these circumstances, it was most difficult for the Christian apologists to admit that there lay in the old religions of the world, and particularly in the Greek or the Latin mythology, any nucleus or germ of the primeval truth. For the logical consequence of such an admission might have seemed to be that they should not sweep the old religion off the face of the earth, but endeavour to reduce it to some imagined standard of its purer infancy : that they should not destroy it, but reform it : whereas, on the contrary, their purpose was, and could not but be, not to reform but to destroy. They met, then, the traditional claims of Paganism by taking their stand upon the purer, clearer, and still older tradition of the Hebrews. They parried the negative value in argument of an undefined

antiquity with the positive record of the creation of the world, and with the sublime exordium of the human race, propagated in a definite line from man to man, down to the firm ground of historic times. So far so good. But still they were obstinately confronted by a system contemporaneous both in space and in duration with the civilised world, and able, too, to say of itself, with some apparent truth, that when civilisation and culture themselves began they did not make or bring it, but found it on the ground before them. Thus upon the merely historic field the battle might have looked, to the ordinary spectator, like a drawn one; while it seemed needful for the dignity and high origin of the new religion to conquer not at one point but at all. Hence perhaps the tendency of the Christian apologists, in unconscious obedience to the exigencies of controversy, after they had proved by reasoning the truth and authority of the Gospel, and had smitten their enemy, as they did smite him, to the dust, by their moral arguments against Paganism, to accelerate its end, and to demolish the very last of its seeming titles, its antiquity of origin, by refusing to affiliate any part or parcel of it, at any point of time, to the stock of a primeval religion, and by contending that so much of truth as was scattered through the rolls of its literature had been filtered in detail through successive media, from Greece to Rome, from Egypt to Greece, but was ultimately to be traced in every case to the ancient people of God, and to the records and traditions which had had an historical existence among them.

I turn now to the remarkable work of Eusebius, commonly called the *Praeparatio Evangelica*. In that work he sets forth the moral impurity, imbecility, impiety, and falseness of the Pagan system. He contrasts with it the marvellous prerogatives of the older Scriptures. In what lies beyond this province, he is not so injudicious as to depreciate the intellectual development of the Hellenic race, alike original and vast. But he says they learned, in its elementary form, the "superstitious error" of their religion, which by their own genius they afterwards recast and



adorned,<sup>1</sup> from Egyptian, Phœnician, and other foreign sources: but their glimpses of the Godhead, and whatever they had of instruction for the soul's health, they obtained, by importation mediate or immediate, from the Hebrews only, except in as far as it was supplied them by the light of nature.<sup>2</sup>

The question here arises, if the Hellenic race got their religion from Phœnicia and Egypt, from whence did Egypt and Phœnicia obtain it? And here it is that we come upon the chief error into which Eusebius was led by the controversial exigencies of his position. He treats the religions of the world as having been purely and wholly, even in their first beginnings, errors and inventions of the human mind, without any trace or manner of relationship to that Divine truth which, as he truly tells us, had been imparted to the Hebrews long before the days of Moses and the composition of the Pentateuch. According to him, the old religions were made up of worships offered to the heavenly bodies, to the powers of nature, to the spirits of departed men, to useful or important arts and inventions, and to the demoniac race in its two families of the good and the evil.

He admits, in every part of his work, that he appears in the arena to maintain and justify the Christians as the authors of a schism in the religious world; and this admission it is which, by the nature of his propositions and his argument, he converts into a boast.

<sup>1</sup> This appropriating power of the Greeks is well expressed in a passage quoted by Eusebius from Diodorus, who is describing the view taken of that power by the Egyptians (*Praep. Evang.* ii. 6), καθόλου δὲ φασὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐξιδιδάσθαι τοὺς ἐπιφανεστάτους Αἰγυπτίων ἡρώας τε καὶ θεούς.

<sup>2</sup> These sentiments are not only contained in particular passages of the *Praeparatio*, but run through the whole work. See for instance:

On the foreign origin of the Greek religion, bk. i. 6, i. 10, ii. 1, and ii. 3. The Hellenic μυθολογίαὶ κάτωθεν ὀρμῶνται, iii. 4.

On the composition of the old religions, v. 3.

On the commendation of the Greek genius and the philosophers, i. 6 (τὰ σεμνὰ τῆς γενναίας Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφίας), i. 8, i. 10, xi. 1, and ii. 6 (ὁ θαυμάσιος Πλάτων . . . ὁ πάντων ἀριστος), v. 33.

On the light of nature, ii. 6 (φύσει καὶ αὐτοδιδάκτοις ἐννοίαις, μᾶλλον δὲ θεοδιδάκτοις), and elsewhere φυσικαὶ ἐννοαίαι.

On the appropriations from the Hebrews, bks. ix. and x.

The view taken by Eusebius was, I apprehend, that generally taken by the Christian apologists. Saint Clement of Alexandria<sup>1</sup> not only denies the originality of the Greeks in what they possessed of truth, but treats as a theft their appropriation of Hebrew ideas;<sup>2</sup> and fancifully, I might say whimsically, supports the charge by instances of plagiarism perpetrated by one Greek author on another. Justin Martyr<sup>3</sup> allows no higher parentage to the Greek mythology than the poets, who were bad enough, or, still worse as he says, the philosophers. Lactantius<sup>4</sup> ascribes to fallen angels, or daemons, the invention of image-worship. Theophilus<sup>5</sup> affirms that the gods of the heathen were dead men; Lactantius<sup>6</sup> that they were *reges maximi et potentissimi*. But time does not permit and the argument does not require me to pursue this part of the subject into greater detail.<sup>7</sup> Suffice it to say that the early Christian writers, not the narrow-minded men that many take them for, did not deny or disparage the intellectual prodigies of the great heathen races, of those marvellous philosophers, as Eusebius often calls them, that Plato so eminently commended by his intellectual debtor the great Saint Augustine;<sup>8</sup> nor did they make light of the voice of nature in the soul of man, nor of the Divine Government over the whole world at every period of its existence, nor of the truths to be found

<sup>1</sup> *Strom.* bk. vi. p. 618, ed. Col. 1688.

<sup>2</sup> Celsus appears to have used the same imputation of being copyists against the Hebrews; and to have been confuted by Origen on account of the greater antiquity of the Jewish histories. Stillingfleet, *Orig. Sac.* ch. i. (vol. i. p. 16, Oxf. ed.)

<sup>3</sup> *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, 43, 51, 52.

<sup>4</sup> *Div. Inst.* ii. 16.

<sup>5</sup> *Ad Autol.* i. p. 75, A.

<sup>6</sup> *Div. Inst.* i. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Saint Augustine traced the prophecies of Christ in the Sibylline Books (*de Civ. Dei*, bk. xviii. c. 23). Like the other Christian apologists, he commonly treats the heathen deities as real spirits of evil. He seems, in part, like Eusebius, to resolve the personages of the Greek and Roman Mythology into—1. Men deified after death; 2. Elements or Nature Powers; 3. Dæmones (*de Civ. Dei*, bk. xviii. c. 14). He recognises divine aid given to the philosophers of Greece (*de Civ. Dei*, bk. ii. c. 7); and in tracing the history of the two *Civitates*, the *Coelestis*, and the *Terrestris*, he says (bk. xvi. c. 10), that probably there were children of the former in the latter, as well as of the latter in the former.

<sup>8</sup> *De Civ. Dei*, viii. 4, and *Contra Acad.* iii. 37.

in ancient writers. But the defiled and putrescent system of religion which they found confronting them, formidable as it was from antiquity, wide extension, general consent, from the strength of habit, and from the tenacious grasp of powerful interests upon temporal possessions and advantages, this evil system they hunted down in argument without mercy, and did not admit to be an historical and traditional derivation from a primeval truth, which the common ancestry of the Semitic and the European races had once in common enjoyed.

It can hardly be said that there was intentional unfairness in this proceeding. The Christian writers laboured under the same defect of critical knowledge and practice with their adversaries. They took the lives, deeds, and genealogies of the heathen deities, just as they found them in the popular creed, for the starting-points of their argument. Their immediate business was to confute a false religion, and to sweep from the face of the world a crying and incurable moral evil: not to construct an universal philosophy of the religious history of man; for which the time had not then, and perhaps has not yet, arrived. But we have new sources of knowledge, new means of detecting error and guiding inquiry, new points of view open to us; and the more freely and faithfully we use them the more we shall find cause to own, with reverence and thankfulness, the depth, and height, and breadth of the wisdom and goodness of God.

Meantime, it is easy to perceive the polemical advantage which was obtained by this unsparing manner of attack. He brought the case straight to issue, not between differently shaded images of a Deity confessedly the same, with their respective champions ready to uphold their several claims amidst the din of contending preferences and of interminable dispute, but, taking his stand on the threshold of the argument, and like a soldier in fight disencumbering himself of all detail, between the God of the Hebrews on the one side, worshipped from the beginning of mankind, and pretended gods on the other, which could render no distinct account of their origin, and were in truth no gods at all.

And, to estimate the greatness of this advantage, we must take into view the nature of the adverse arguments. The Pagan champions did not too much embarrass themselves by defending the popular forms and fables of the old religion. Perhaps, to the credulous villager, the religion of Porphyry might have been as unintelligible or as odious as that of St. Paul. All these incumbrances were at once disposed of by being treated on the Pagan side as allegorical, figurative, secondary manifestations of the true Deity, or even as having been in many cases due to the intrusive and mischievous activity of the spirits of evil. The Pagan champion, then, was himself contending, not for the forms, but for the one great unseen Deity, which, driven to his shifts, he affirmed to lie hid within the forms. To admit, under circumstances like these, that any principle of inward life, under whatever incrustations, was latent in the mythology as it lay before their eyes, would have been to betray the truth. And any seeming approach to that admission, such as allowing that that foul and loathsome corpse had once been alive in youthful health and beauty, might have sorely hindered and perplexed the Christian argument on its way to the general mind.

As respects the religious ideas of the Greeks, properly so called, and their philosophic tenets, the scholars of the seventeenth century seem to have occupied much the same ground with Eusebius and the early Christian writers. But as respected their mythological personages, not having the Pagans to argue with, they had no prejudices against finding for them a lineage in Scripture. I am not competent to determine how far in the prosecution of their task they went into excess. But those who admit the truth of the Sacred Records, must surely decline to say that they were wrong in principle. We are not called upon to believe that Neptune was Japhet, or that Iphigenia was Jephthah's daughter, or that Deucalion was Noah, or that Bellerophon was really Joseph in the house of Potiphar, notwithstanding certain resemblances of circumstances by which these and some other such cases are marked. But if we believe in the substantial soundness of the text of Scripture and in

the substantial truth of its history, we must then also believe that the Hamitic and Japhetic races, as they in their successive branches set out upon their long migrations, brought with them, from the early home which they had shared with the sons of Shem, the common religious traditions. They could not but go, as Æneas is fabled to have gone from Troy—

Cum patribus populoque, Penatibus et magnis dis.<sup>1</sup>

But if there be those who would strangely forbid us to appeal to what may be called, by the most modest of its august titles, the oldest and most venerable document of human history, the argument still remains much the same. The progress of ethnological and philological research still supplies us with accumulating evidence of the chain of migrations, north and westwards, of the Turanian, and especially of the Aryan races, from points necessarily undefined but in close proximity with the seats of the patriarchal nomads; and has not supplied us with any evidence, or with any presumption whatever, that their known traditions sprang from any fountainhead other than that which is described in the Book of Genesis as the three-branching family of Noah. If, then, upon this ground, there is, to say the least, nothing to exclude or to disparage, but so much to support, the doctrine of the original intercommunion of these races with the Semitic tribes, which could not but include religion, the question recurs in all its force, how was it even possible that they could leave behind them their religious traditions upon the occasion of their first local separation from their parent stock? They did not surely, like the souls in transmigration,<sup>2</sup> drink of the river of forgetfulness, and rase out from the tablets of the brain, as a preparation for their journey, all they had ever known, or heard, or felt. The obscuration and degeneracy of religious systems is commonly indeed a rapid, but is necessarily a gradual process. *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*; and no tribe or nation passes either from light to darkness, or from

<sup>1</sup> *Æn.* viii. 679.

<sup>2</sup> *Plat. de Rep.* bk. x

the possession of a religious belief to the loss of it, at a moment's notice.

It was therefore antecedently probable that, in examining the actual religious systems of later times, and of countries at a distance from the earliest known seat of mankind, but connected with it by the great current of human migration, we should find remaining tokens of affinity to any religious system, which upon competent evidence we might believe to have prevailed among the races most closely and directly connected with that seat. And this antecedent probability is sustained by a mass of evidence running through the whole web of the Hellenic mythology, obscure indeed in its latest and most darkened ages, but continually gaining in force and clearness as we ascend the stream of time, and so strong in itself as to be, I am firmly persuaded, incapable of argumentative confutation.

To collect and present this mass of evidence, with a careful and strict appreciation of the respective value of its parts, is a work not to be attempted within the limits, however extended by your indulgence, of what is termed an Address. But I will now endeavour to bring to a head what has been stated, and to apply it to the purpose which I announced at the commencement.

I submit then to you, that the true *Praeparatio Evangelica*, or the rearing and training of mankind for the Gospel, was not confined to that eminent and conspicuous part of it, which is represented by the dispensations given to the Patriarchs and the Jews, but extends likewise to other fields of human history and experience; among which, in modes, and in degrees, varyingly perceptible to us, the Almighty distributed the operations preliminary and introductory to His one great, surpassing, and central design for the recovery and happiness of mankind. So that, in their several spheres, some positive, some negative, some spiritual, some secular, with a partial consciousness, or with an absolute unconsciousness, all were co-operators in working out His will; under a guidance strong, and subtle, and the more sublime, perhaps, in proportion as it was the less sensible.

In the body of those traditions of primitive religion which are handed down to us in the Book of Genesis, and which I shall make no further apology for treating as records of great historic weight, there was manifestly included what I may term an humanistic element. It was embodied in the few but pregnant words which declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.<sup>1</sup> The principle of evil was to receive a deadly shock in its vital part, and this at the hands of One who should be born into the very race that He would come to deliver.

The next observation I would submit is this: that there was no provision made, so far as we are aware, at any rate in the Mosaic system, for keeping alive this particular element of the original traditions, otherwise than as an anticipation reaching into the far distant future. On the contrary, every precaution was apparently taken to prevent any human being, or any human form, from becoming the object of a religious reverence. To this aim the abstraction of the body of Moses<sup>2</sup> from the view of the people seems to be most naturally referred; and the stringent prohibitions of the Second Commandment of the Decalogue appear to have been especially pointed against the execution by human hands of the figure of a man. For we hear in Holy Writ of the serpent<sup>3</sup> made by Moses and exhibited to the nation; and the brazen sea of the Temple<sup>4</sup> rested upon twelve brazen oxen. There were cherubim in the Ark framed by Moses,<sup>5</sup> and "cherubim of image-work" were made by Solomon for the Temple;<sup>6</sup> but they were not, it is commonly believed, in human figure; and the four living creatures of the vision of Ezekiel had each the mixed character of man, lion, ox, and eagle.<sup>7</sup>

And it would appear that these measures were effectual. Ready as were the Jews to worship the serpent or the golden calf, their idolatry never was anthropomorphic. The majesty of the Deity was thus kept, in the belief of

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Num. xxi. 8, 9; John iii. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Exod. xxv. 17.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Chron. iii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chron. iv. 2-5.

<sup>7</sup> Ezek. i. 5-10.

the Hebrew race, effectually apart from that one form of lowering association, which, as we see from the experience of Paganism, was by far the subtlest, the most attractive, and the most enchaining. A pure Theistic system was maintained; a redemption to come was embraced in faith; and, in a religion laden with ritual and charged with symbol, no rite, no symbol, was permitted to exhibit to the senses, and through the senses to the mind, of the people the form of Him that was to be the worker of the great deliverance. Thus was kept vacant until the appointed time, in the general belief as well as in the scheme or theory of religion, the sublime and solitary place which the Redeemer of the world was to fill. Counterfeits there were, but they had not that dangerous resemblance to the truth, which would enable them to make head against the Messiah when He should arrive. And so, after He had come, His only rivals and competitors in Judæa were conceptions, distorted in the abstract, of His character and office; far different from those solid formations of an embodied and organised religion, whose dangerous contact the Gospel had not come to encounter, until the life and work of its author, and the foundation of the Christian society with all its essential powers, were complete.

Let us now turn to the religion of the Hellenic race; and we shall find that, as matter of fact, it appropriated to itself, and was intensely permeated by, that very anthropomorphic<sup>1</sup> element which the Mosaic system was so especially framed to exclude, and to which the other religions of antiquity gave, in comparison, but a doubtful and secondary place.

If I am asked to point out a link which especially associates the early Greek mythology with the humanistic element of primitive tradition, I venture to name the character of Apollo as pre-eminently supplying such a link. He is born of Zeus, but he is not born of Herè. Through

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Grote remarks upon this anthropomorphic genius of the Hellenic religion, under the name of an universal "tendency to personification."—*History of Greece*, i. 462. Mr. Ruskin has some striking observations on the same subject.



him the divine counsels are revealed to the world as the God of prophecy and of oracle. This lamp of knowledge, burning in him, establishes an affinity between him and the sun; but the anthropomorphic energy of the religion is jealous of the absorption of Deity into mere nature-power. At what period the identification of Apollo with the sun took place in the Hellenic system, we cannot say; but this we know, that it had not taken place in the time of Homer, with whom Apollo and the Sun are perfectly distinct individuals. To him is assigned the healing art, and the general office of deliverance. To him again, who remains to the last the perfect model of masculine beauty in the human form, is assigned by tradition the conquest alike over Death and over the might of the rebellious spirits. In his hands we find functions of such rank and such range, that we cannot understand how they could pass to him from Zeus the supreme deity, until we remember that they are the very functions assigned by a more real and higher system to the Son of God, the true Instructor, Healer, Deliverer, Judge, and Conqueror of Death, in whom the power and majesty of the Godhead were set forth to the world.<sup>1</sup>

The character of this deity, whom Eusebius calls "the most venerable and the wisest"<sup>2</sup> of the whole Olympian order, affords, in my opinion, the most complete and varied proof of the traditional relationship to which I now refer. Abundant evidence, however, of the same character might be adduced under many other heads. But I do not refer to

<sup>1</sup> Apollo. Mr. Max Müller says, in his most able work on *Language*, vol. ii. p. 433, that Apollo drew to himself the worship of the Dorian family, Athene of the Ionian, Poseidon of the Æolian, but that the worship of Zeus reached over all. I venture to doubt the accuracy of this classification. The Greek mythology was eminently favourable, as one of popular idolatry, to the development of particular local worships, and the preferences were much associated with race. But it would surprise me to see any proof that the worship of Apollo, or that of Athene, was anything less than universal among the Greeks. The invaluable work of Pausanias, with its careful and patient enumerations, appears to form a conclusive standard of appeal on this subject.

On the character of Apollo, see C. O. Müller's *Dorians*, Lewis and Tuffnell's translation, i. 329.

<sup>2</sup> *Praep. Evang.* iv. 17.

this weighty subject at present with a view of leading you to affirm the existence of such a relationship: that could not legitimately be done, except upon a scrutiny, both deliberate and minute, of a great mass of evidence, gathered from many quarters, and dependent for much of its force upon careful comparison and juxtaposition. I now advert to the question only as casting light upon matter which will follow. What I take, however, to be indisputable, apart from all theorising upon causes, is this fact—that the Hellenic mythology is charged throughout with the humanistic element, in a manner clearly and broadly separating it from the other religions of the ancient world. It has anthropomorphism for the soul and centre of all that is distinctive in it; and that peculiar quality seems to enter, more or less, into the religion of other tribes nearly in proportion as they were related to the Hellenic race.

Let us now shortly contemplate that mythology, such as it appears in the works of Homer, its prime and most conspicuous author, and himself the true representative of the purely Hellenic spirit in its largest and most authentic form.

The theology of Homer is variously composed. He seems to have lived at the critical moment in the history of the Hellenic, or, as they were then called, Achaian families or tribes, when the different ethnical elements or factors with which they were to assimilate—Pelagic, Ionian, Egyptian, Phœnician, and the like—settled down and compounded themselves into the firmly-knit and sharply-defined character of a people, and they were no longer a chaotic assemblage of unassorted or even conflicting units, but as a people were born into that world on whose fortunes they were to exercise an influence almost immeasurable.

The theology of Homer is the Olympian system; and that system exhibits a kind of royal or palace-life of man,<sup>1</sup> but on the one hand more splendid and powerful, on the other more intense and free. It is a wonderful and a gorgeous creation. It is eminently in accordance with the signification of that English epithet—rather a favourite

<sup>1</sup> Grote's *History of Greece*, vol. i. pp. 4 sqq. and 462 sqq.

apparently with our old writers—the epithet *jovial*,<sup>1</sup> which is derived from the Latin name of its head. It is a life of all the pleasures of mind and body, of banquet and of revel, of music and of song; a life in which solemn grandeur alternates with jest and gibe; a life of childish wilfulness and fretfulness, combined with serious, manly, and imperial cares; for the Olympus of Homer has at least this one recommendation to esteem,—that it is not peopled with the merely lazy and selfish gods of Epicurus, but its inhabitants busily deliberate on the government of man, and in their debates the cause of justice wins. I do not now, however, discuss the moral titles of the Olympian scheme; what I dwell upon is, its intense humanity, alike in its greatness and its littleness, its glory and its shame.

As the cares and joys of human life, so the structure of society below is reflected, by the wayward wit of man, on heaven above. Though the names and fundamental traditions of the several deities were wholly or in great part imported from abroad, their characters, relations, and attributes passed under a Hellenising process, which gradually marked off for them special provinces and functions, according to laws which appear to have been mainly original and indigenous, and to have been taken by analogy from the division of labour in political society. As early as in Homer, while the prerogatives of Apollo and Athenè are almost universal, yet the Olympian society has

<sup>1</sup> The word “jovial” appears to be one of that group of words, too little noticed, which have come into the English tongue direct from the Italian, and to abound in our old authors. It is explained by Johnson as meaning—1. Under the influence of Jupiter; 2. Gay, airy, merry. But I do not find in any of our dictionaries or word-books which I have consulted any notice of what appears to be its *differentia*, and to make it reflect the idea of the Olympian life: namely, that in its proper use it does not mean merriment simply, but an elevated or royal kind of merriment. Thus Drayton speaks of the “princely jovial fowl”; and the sense is exactly touched in a speech of Lear (Act iv. Scene 6)—

What!

I will be jovial: *come, come*; I am a king,  
My masters, know you that.

This distinctive flavour of the sense has been in part rubbed out; yet *jovial* is not even now synonymous with *merry*: we should more properly say *jovial* men, *merry* children, than *vice versa*.

its complement of officers and servants with their proper functions. Hephaistos moulds the twenty golden thrones which move automatically to form the circle of the council of the gods; and builds for each of his brother deities their separate palaces in the deep-folded recesses of the mighty mountain. Music and song are supplied by Apollo and the Muses; Ganymede and Hebe are the cup-bearers; Hermes and Iris are the messengers; but Themis, in whom is impersonated the idea of deliberation and of relative rights, is the summoner of the *κατακλησία*<sup>1</sup> or Great Assembly of the twentieth *Iliad*, when the great issue of the war is to be determined. Nothing nearer this on earth has perhaps been bodied forth by the imagination of later poets than the scene, in which Schiller has described the coronation of Rodolph of Hapsburg, with the Electors of the Empire discharging their several offices around him: I quote from the only translation within my reach:—

The ancient hall of Aix was bright :  
 The coronation-board beside  
 Sate king Rodolph's anointed might,  
 In Kaiser's pomp and pride :  
 His meat was served by the Palatine,  
 Bohemia poured the sparkling wine ;  
 The seven Electors every one  
 Stood, fast about the wide-world's king,  
 Each his high function following,  
 Like the planets round the sun.

But a still deeper trace of humanitarianism lay in the transportation of the family order into heaven. Only the faintest rudiment of such a system could have been drawn from Semitic sources; but it was carried by the Hellenes to its furthest consequences, and used for the basis of their supernatural structure. The old Pelasgian deities of the country, the importations from Thrace, Phœnicia, Egypt, or elsewhere, and the traditions proper to the Hellenic tribes

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of remark, that in Homer the political life of man is reflected even as to some portion of its detail by the divine life. The institution of the *βουλή*, or council, was already well marked off from that of the *ἀγορή*, or Assembly. So the ordinary meeting on Olympus seems to be the *βουλή*, but this, which precedes the Theomachy, to correspond with the Assembly.

themselves, were all marshalled and adjusted in a scheme formed according to the domestic relations familiar to us on earth. The Nature-powers of the older worship received the honorary distinction of being made parents and grand or great-grand sires to the ruling dynasty; but, while thus tricked out with barren dignity, they were deprived of all active functions, and relegated into practical insignificance. Still the very arrangements, which are anomalous in the abstract, testify to the strength of that anthropomorphic principle, to which they owed their recognition. For the elder deities were not the more powerful; and parents were supplanted by their sons. Oceanus the sire of the whole family, and Tethys their mother, have for practical purposes no power or place in the Olympian system. They exercise no influence whatever on the life or destinies of man. As the mere representations of certain physical forces, they were ejected from their old supremacy by the more aspiring and truer tendencies of the first Hellenic creed; but that same creed, still copying earth in heaven, found for them a place, as the decrepit and superannuated members of the system, who had passed from the exercise of sovereignty into retirement, like Laertes<sup>1</sup> on his rural farm in Ithaca. More or less of the same domestic structure is ascribed without doubt to the theogonies of some other countries; but our accounts of them may have been influenced by Greek sympathies, and besides I am not aware that in any of them the domestic theory was worked out with the same genial feeling, and almost universal consistency.

In one respect indeed, at the least, there was a conflict of contending sentiments. The early Hellenes seem to have had a peculiar horror of incestuous connection. But the notion of unity of descent among the gods excluded the possibility of arranging them in the family order except by nuptial relationships which, upon earth and for themselves, Greeks would have abhorred. The strong repugnance gave way under the bidding of a necessity yet stronger: their profound sense of the natural order was less disturbed by having Zeus a polygamist, with his sister for his principal

<sup>1</sup> *Odys.* xxiv. 205 *sqq.*

wife, than it would have been by abandoning that scheme of propagation from parent to child upon which the whole Olympian hierarchy was arranged. The acknowledgment of what was forbidden on earth as established in heaven represents, in all likelihood, the concessions which were necessary in order to prevent a breach in the framework of the popular creed, and to weld into one system elements that belonged to many.

The materials for the old religions, outside of Greece and the Greek races, were in great part afforded first by the worship of nature, and secondly by the worship of animals. Both of these the early Hellenic system steadily rejected and eschewed; and their religion took its stand upon the idea, which inseparably incorporated deity in the matchless human form. This, and much besides, obscured in the later and more mixed traditions, stands out clearly in the earliest records of the Greeks. The *Theogony* of Hesiod, which must be regarded as a work of very great antiquity, exhibits to us the elemental and the Olympian gods in groups clearly enough distinguished. The poems of Homer, far more Hellenic in their spirit, may be said to exclude and repel from the sacred precinct alike the heavenly bodies and the elemental powers. The plague in the first *Iliad* bears evident marks of solar agency; but, without the least allusion to that luminary, it is ascribed to Apollo in one of the noblest anthropomorphic passages of the poems. The Sun<sup>1</sup> only once appears as a person in the *Iliad*, when he

<sup>1</sup> The Sun in the *Iliad*, see *Il.* xviii.—

ἥλιον δ' ἀκάμαντα βοῶντις πόντια "Ἡρῇ  
πέμψεν ἐπ' Ὀκεανοῖο ῥοὰς ἀέκοντα νέεσθαι.

Why being thus passive, and scarcely animate, is the planet represented as unwilling? The answer must be founded on conjecture. But I conceive it to be probably this. The Trojan worship seems to have been more elemental than the Greek: so the Sun was unwilling to cut short that famous day, which was to be the last day of prosperity to the Trojan arms.

In the *Odyssey* we have no mention of the worship of the Sun by the Greeks; and when Eurypulos in Thrinakie persuades his companions to slay the oxen of that deity for food, he says, "when we return to Ithaca, we can make him a rich temple and precinct, with abundant votive gifts" (*Od.* xii. 346)—

πίονα νηὶν  
τεύξομεν, ἐν δέ κε θεῖμεν ἀγάλματα πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλά,

reluctantly obeys the command of Herè that by setting he shall end the day, which was the last day of Trojan success; thus indicating the side to which, as an elemental deity, he inclined. Again, Xanthos, a river god, appears in the Theomachy: but he appears on the side of Troy; and he seems also to have had one name as a deity with the Trojans,<sup>1</sup> another with the Greeks or Achaians as a stream. When Agamemnon offers solemn sacrifice for his army only, he invokes Zeus alone, and invokes him as dwelling in the sky.<sup>2</sup> But when he offers the joint sacrifice of the two parties in the Third Book, then he invokes Zeus as governing from the hill of Ida, which was in his view, and invokes with him the Sun, the Earth, and the Rivers.<sup>3</sup> The Rivers are summoned to the Olympian assembly of the Twentieth Book; but it is an assembly in which the gods are to take their several sides. It is a mistake to suppose that Poseidon was an elemental god: he was the patron of the sea, as he was of the horse, but he was more the god of navigation than of water. The sea had its elemental god, the hoary Nereus, with Amphitrite seemingly for his wife; but Amphitrite is always the moaning Amphitrite, and Nereus never emerges from the depths; nor, though he is frequently referred to, is he ever named on the Hellenic page of Homer.<sup>4</sup> I turn to another head.

Loath on the one side to admit the imposing elements of Nature-worship on the grand scale, the Olympian system

thus raising the inference that he had none already existing in that very small island.

<sup>1</sup> *On the Invocation of Rivers.*—It is probable that these may have been admitted more or less into purely local worship: Achilles in Troja not only invokes his own Spercheios, but mentions his father's prayer and vow to offer an hecatomb to the stream, in the place where was its glebe and altar. In this class of cases, the anthropomorphic force of the Greek system showed itself by investing the rivers with human forms. Achelous, the most famous of them, fought against Herakles for Deianira, sought her hand, and had many other wives. Odysseus invokes the river in Corfu, but then he is in the sphere of the outer geography, and of a theology differing from the Greek. Asteropaios, a Pæonian hero, is grandson to the River Axios.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* ii. 412.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* iii.

<sup>4</sup> The single clear trace that I remember to have perceived in Homer of the elemental creed is this, that, in one single passage, he calls the sacrificial fire by the name of Hephaistos, the god of fire. *Il.* ii. 426.

is yet more alien to the other favourite form of religious illusion, the worship offered to animals, and particularly to the ox; of which Egypt seems to have been the headquarters. In the full exhibition, which the poems of Homer afford us, of the religion in its earlier forms, there is not a trace of animal worship. In the *Odyssey*, indeed, an awful and mystic sacredness attaches to the Oxen of the Sun. In the island of Thrinakie, detained by adverse winds, the companions of Odysseus are warned that under no extremity should they supply their wants by the destruction of these animals. Accordingly they resort to birds and fish, unusual food with the Homeric Greeks; they finally put some of the animals to death, only to avoid dying themselves by famine; and for this offence the entire crew, except Odysseus, who had not shared in it, are drowned when next they take to sea. Now, although there is no animal worship here, there is what may be called animal sanctity; but it is in connection with a deity not even recognised at the time in the Hellenic system; and introduced as it is during the voyage in remote parts, which must have been based upon the tales of Phœnician mariners, it appears certainly to belong to the Phœnician circle of mythology.

And here we find an example of the manner in which the immense plastic power of the Hellenic mind dealt with foreign ideas of all kinds, so as to make them its own. What their sculptors did with the rude and formless art of Egypt, what their philosophers did with the shreds of Eastern knowledge picked up on their travels, their theology did with the many and crude varieties of superstition, which flowed in upon them from the numerous quarters that furnished by sea and land immigrants for the Hellenic peninsula. The old Pelasgian gods, not rudely overthrown, but gently taken from their pedestals, were set down harmless in the shade of a mellow distance; and the animals, before which lower types of men were content to bow down the godlike head, were not, when the traditions that deified them set foot on Grecian soil, thrust wholly out of view; but they were put into appropriate and always secondary



places. The eagle of Zeus, the falcon of Apollo, the peacock of Herè, the owl of Pallas, stood no higher in Greece than as accessories to the figures on which they attend.

In the scheme of Homer, not all even of these are found. And while in Homer we should look in vain for anything beyond the faintest and most ambiguous trace of a connection between Apollo and the wolf, we find that connection full-blown in the Egyptian mythology, as it is reported by Diodorus, where Horos, his counterpart in the system of that country, is rescued from death by Osiris in the form of that animal; and on the other hand, the later Greek tradition, more deeply charged with foreign elements, abounds with traditions of the wolf,<sup>1</sup> which in Athens was the protective emblem of the courts of justice. But, even thus far down the stream, the rule seems to hold, that when the figures of the brute creation are allowed to appear in the Hellenic system, they seem to be reduced to subordinate and secondary uses.

Saint Clement, indeed, charges<sup>2</sup> upon the Greeks certain instances both of nature-worship and of the worship of animals; but in a manner, and with particulars, which show how slight and local were the instances of either. It will not be expected that in an Address of this nature I should attempt those minuter shadings, which general statements like the foregoing must require in order to perfect accuracy. Besides, a common substratum of ideas runs through the mass of the old religions of the world; but we trace the genius of each nation, and it may be the Providential purpose for which that genius was imparted, in its distinctive mode of handling the common stock, here enlarging, there contracting, here elevating, there depressing, so as to produce a distinctive and characteristic result.

And now I will endeavour to point out, in rude and rapid outline, some of the remarkable results of this *idée mère* of the Greek religion, the annexation of manhood to deity, and the reciprocal incorporation of deity into manhood: which made the human form the link between the visible

<sup>1</sup> Müller's *Dorians*, i. 273, 325 (Tufnell and Lewis's translation).

<sup>2</sup> S. Clem. *Admonitio ad Gentes*, p. 16, B.

and the invisible worlds, the meeting-point of earth and heaven. And here my object will be only to give you a sample of the redundant materials which seem to rise up around me thickly piled on every side; most of all, perhaps, in the Homeric or Achaian period.

First I will remark a profound reverence for human life and human nature, which even the fiercest passions of war would but rarely, and only for a moment, violate. Hence we find the highest refinements of the manners of the gentleman existing at a time, when, among the Greeks, the material appliances of civilisation were in their infancy, and when writing and the alphabet were practically unknown. The sentiment of honour is indicated, at this epoch, by a word (*αἰδώς*) too delicate for our rendering by a single term in the English, perhaps in any modern tongue. A catalogue of horrors that have stained the life of man elsewhere, sometimes even in the midst of the triumphs of culture and refinement, were unknown to the Achaian period. I will dwell for a moment on one of these, the practice of human sacrifice.

You will find<sup>1</sup> from a charming volume, the *Miscellanies* of Lord Stanhope, that, a few years ago, some of the most famous men of our day were brought by him into correspondence on the interesting, but to many startling, question whether human sacrifices were in use among the Romans: not the unlettered semi-barbarians of Romulus or Tarquin, but the Romans of Rome in its highest political power and its palmiest civilisation. Naturally enough, a considerable repugnance was manifested to entertaining this supposition; but as the inquiry proceeded, a younger yet profoundly learned scholar, Sir John Acton, was brought into the field. His full and varied researches do not appear in the pages of Lord Stanhope. But they range well-nigh over all space and time. His conclusions are that "we find traces of it, that is of human sacrifice, throughout almost the whole Hellenic world, in the *cultus* of almost every god, and in all periods of their independent history."<sup>2</sup> That among the Romans it was still more rife; and that, though attempts were made to restrain or put down the practice, even the

<sup>1</sup> Stanhope's *Miscellanies*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Acton, p. 19.

famous edict of Adrian, to which Eusebius allows the honour of its extinction, failed to effect it; nay, more, that "in every generation of the four centuries, from the fall of the Republic to the establishment of Christianity, human victims were sacrificed by the Emperors" themselves.

The conclusions of Sir John Acton are not admitted in their full breadth by other great authorities;<sup>1</sup> but it seems impossible to doubt the widespread and long-continued, or often-recurring prevalence of the practice, in contact, more or less, with civilised times and nations, and sustained in various degrees by perverse but accepted ideas of religion.

Notwithstanding this terrible and too well sustained indictment against the unenlightened and the enlightened world, it is pleasing to observe that this horrible rite did not originally belong to the usages of Greece. It seems to have come in by a late contagion from abroad: and human sacrifice is not found in Homer. The slaughter of some Trojan youths by Achilles, in his unsated vengeance, has none of the marks of a religious rite, and no relation to a deity. Of the tradition of Iphigenia, sacrificed in Aulis for the welfare of the Achaian host, Homer is wholly ignorant; and Agamemnon in the *Iliad* speaks of his daughters as open to the option of Achilles, as many fathers may since have done who had two or three of them ready to marry, but so as almost to supply sufficient evidence that no such blood-stained gap had been made in the circle of his family. It is many centuries later when the tradition reaches us in the works of the tragedians. In that grandest of all Greek dramas, the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, his murderous wife Clytemnestra seeks an apology for her act partly in the immolation of Iphigenia by her father's hand; and the tone of the play is so condemnatory as to suggest that an Athenian audience, of the middle of the fifth century before Christ, did not allow religion to be an adequate apology for the deed.

At a somewhat later period, the *Iphigenia in Tauris* of Euripides supplies us with more direct evidence that the practice, while not indigenous in Greece, was foully rife

<sup>1</sup> Milman's *Hist. of Christ.* i. p. 27, 1st edition.

among other races. The scene is laid abroad in barbaric territory; and the chorus of Greek attendants on the doomed Princess, addressing the Deity, says, "Receive, O venerable one, this sacrifice, if it be a sacrifice agreeable to thee, which the law of us Greeks declares to be unholy." Thus showing that the tradition of the foreign origin of the abominable rite, and the original freedom of the Hellenic system from it, was cherished in the memory of the people.

I have already had to observe that the Achæians eschewed both incest and polygamy. I may add that even the unconscious incest of Œdipus and Jocasta drew down the heaviest calamities; and further that we have no trace, among the Homeric records, not only of cannibalism but of violence to nature in any form. The crimes of abortion and the exposure of infants, authorised and commended by Plato in his ideal State,<sup>1</sup> have no place in the Homeric poems; nor do they afford the slightest indication of those shameless lusts, which formed the incredible and indelible disgrace<sup>2</sup> of Greece in the time of its consummate supremacy in Art, and at the climax of its boasted civilisation.

If I am right in my estimate of the place which the human form held in its relation to the Hellenic religion, we may naturally expect to find it attested, among other ways, by the following signs:—an intense admiration of personal beauty;<sup>3</sup> a resentment against and avoidance of deformity, as a kind of sin against the law of nature; and a marked disposition to associate ignorance with vice.

I cannot now undertake to exhibit the remarkable manner in which these anticipations are realised in Homer, whose appreciation of the beauty of the human form appears from unequivocal signs to exceed that of any author in any age or country; while upon the other side, introducing but

<sup>1</sup> Plat. *de Republ.* bk. vi.

<sup>2</sup> On this subject, as a testimony *instar omnium*, see the passage in Aristophanes, *Neph.* 1087-1100.

<sup>3</sup> "Philippus of Crotona was actually deified by the inhabitants of Segeste, and had sacrifices offered to him in his lifetime on account of his beauty. Cypselus instituted prizes for beauty; while such was the honour conferred by its possession, that Elpinice, the sister of Cimon, did not hesitate to sit as model to Polygnotus."—Falkener's *Daedalus*, p. 33, note.

one vicious character, Thersites, among the Greeks of the *Iliad*, he describes his personal appearance with a degree of detail foreign to his habit, in order, seemingly, that, even as we read, we may see him before us in his hideous deformity. The same topics might be illustrated in detail from the later history of Greece, in modes inconsistent or questionable enough, yet abundantly significant. Courtesans of extraordinary beauty were sometimes chosen to march in the processions of the gods. By the side of the evil tradition of Aphrodite the promiscuous, there lingered long the rival tradition of an Aphrodite the heavenly. On the other hand, with respect to deformity, I do not remember that Aristophanes,<sup>1</sup> in his campaign against Socrates, makes the use which we might have expected of the ugliness of the philosopher. And though jests were freely passed upon actual eccentricity of feature, I have not seen it proved, in such partial examination of the subject as has lain within my power, that the Greeks were wont to make use of that which we call caricature; which I understand to be, the founding upon some known or peculiar feature a representation of deformity that does not exist, for the purpose of exciting ridicule or hatred. Among the moderns this practice appears to have been employed even to stimulate religious animosity or fury; and the rarity or absence of it, among a people possessed of such high sarcastic power as the Greeks, suggests that it may have been excluded by the predominating force of a traditional reverence, grown into instinct, for the beauty of the human form; having its origin nowhere with greater likelihood than in the early and continued association of that form with the highest objects of religion.

<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, in *Neph.* 540, Aristophanes takes credit to himself because his play made no jest upon baldness—

οὐδ' ἔσκωψε τοὺς φαλακροὺς,

and this is believed to be a rebuke to Eupolis for having condescended to ridicule Aristophanes himself on the score of baldness (Mitchell *in loc.*). The conclusion I have stated in the text as to caricature seems to me, on the whole, to be supported by the collection of instances in the work of Champfleury. On the use of caricature for religion, see Lecky's *Rationalism*, vol. ii. p. 1.

I will now refer to the feeling of the Homeric period concerning the sacredness of the human body against both violation and exposure. The horror of Priam in anticipating his own death at the coming sack of Troy rises to its climax, when he brings into the picture the tearing and defilement by dogs of his own exposed and naked figure.<sup>1</sup> And the extremest point of punishment threatened to the degraded Thersites appears to be the stripping of his person for the disgust and derision of the camp, and the seaming it with "indecorous" wounds.<sup>2</sup> Nor was this respect for decency a shallow or short-lived tradition. It was indeed rudely tried; since it came into conflict with the eagerness of the race for high physical activity and athletic development, stimulated to the uttermost by the great national institution of the Games, in which, as Horace said with little exaggeration, the palm of the victor uplifted even the lords of earth to the honours of the gods. Yet, important as it was for perfection in those unparalleled contests to free the person from the restraints of clothing, Thucydides<sup>3</sup> in his Preface tells us that the athletes were formerly covered; that the Lacedæmonians were the first to strip in the arena; and that it was not many years before his time when the fashion reached its height.

But when we are seeking to ascertain the measure of that conception which any given race has formed of our nature, there is perhaps no single test so effective as the position which it assigns to woman. For as the law of force is the law of the brute creation, so, in proportion as he is under the yoke of that law, does man approximate to the brute; and in proportion, on the other hand, as he has escaped from its dominion, is he ascending into the higher sphere of being, and claiming relationship with deity. But the emancipation and due ascendancy of woman are not a mere fact: they are the emphatic assertion of a principle; and that principle is the dethronement of the law of force,

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* xxii. 66-76.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* ii. 261-64 *δείκναι πληγῶν*. To appreciate the force of the remarks the passages should be consulted in the original.

<sup>3</sup> Thucyd. i. c. 6. See Aristoph. *Νεφ.* 972 *sqq.*, on the garb of youth, when with their master of gymnastics.

and the enthronement of other and higher laws in its place, and in its despoite.

Outside the pale of Christianity, it would be difficult to find a parallel, in point of elevation, to the Greek woman of the heroic age. Mr. Buckle candidly acknowledges that her position was then much higher than it had come to be in the most civilised historic period of Greece; and yet he was a writer whose bias, and the general cast of whose opinions, would have disposed him to an opposite conclusion. Again: if the pictures presented by the historical books of the Old Testament and by Homer respectively be compared, candour will claim from us a verdict in favour of the position of the Greek as compared with that of the Hebrew woman. Among the Jews polygamy was permitted; to the Greeks, as has been said, it was unknown. Tales like that of Amnon and Tamar,<sup>1</sup> or like that of the Levite and his concubine,<sup>2</sup> are not found even among the deeds of the dissolute Suitors of the *Odyssey*. Among the Jews the testimony of our Lord is that because of the hardness of their hearts Moses suffered them to put away their wives; but that "from the beginning it was not so."<sup>3</sup> Apart from the violent contingencies of war, manners seem to have been, in the momentous point of divorce, not very different among the Greeks of the heroic age from what they had been in "the beginning." The picture of Penelope waiting for her husband through the creeping course of twenty years, and of Odysseus yearning in like manner for his wife, is one of the most remarkable in the whole history of human manners; and it would lose little, if anything, of its deeper significance and force, even if we believed that the persons, whom the poet names Odysseus and Penelope, have never lived. It must be observed, too, what, in the mind of Homer, constitutes the extraordinary virtue or the royal matron. It is not the refusal to marry another while her husband is alive, but her stubborn determination not to accept the apparently certain conclusion that he must have ceased to live. Not even the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Judges xix.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. xix. 8.

Suitors suggest that, if he be indeed alive, any power can set her free.

Scarcely less noteworthy, for the purpose of the present argument, are the immunities which she enjoys even in her painful position. She is importuned, but she is not insulted. She feels horror and aversion, but she has no cause for fear. Such, in the morning of Greek life, was the reverence that hedged a woman, as she sat alone and undefended in the midst of a body of powerful and abandoned men.

Again: the famous scene of Hector and Andromache<sup>1</sup> is not more touching by its immeasurable tenderness than it is important for the proof which it affords, with reference to the contemporary manners, of what may be called the moral equality of man and wife. And the general effect of the poems is, to give an idea of a social parity, and of a share borne by women in the practical and responsible duties of life, such as we seek in vain, notwithstanding some charming specimens of character, among the Jews. Still less can it be found among the Greeks of the more polished ages. In their annals, we scarce ever hear of a wife or mother, though the names of mistresses and courtesans are entered on the roll of fame, and Phryne<sup>2</sup> dedicated in a Phocian temple a gilded statue of herself, which was wrought by the hand of Praxiteles. Indeed, not to speak of the poetry of Euripides, even the most solid and impartial judgments, such as those of Thucydides and Aristotle, were unfavourably warped in their estimate of women.

It would, I have no doubt, be possible to illustrate in great detail from ancient records the high value set by the Greeks upon man, in his mind, life, and person. I will mention two instances from Pausanias. An Arcadian, named Skedastos, living at Leuctra, had two daughters, who were violated by Lacedæmonian youths. Unable to bear the shame, they put an end to their lives. Their father, also, having in vain sought justice from the Spartan authorities, sternly recoiled from the disgrace, and destroyed himself. In after times Epaminondas, about to join battle with the Spartans at the place, made offerings and prayers to the

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* vi. 390 *seqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, x. c. 14, *sub fin.*



insulted maidens and to their parent; and then won the victory which laid low the power of Sparta.

The other is of a different, and a yet more singular, character. The statue of Theagenes, the Thasian athlete,<sup>1</sup> after his death, fell upon an enemy of his and killed him. The sons of the man, who thus lost his life, brought an action against the statue; and it was thrown into the sea, under a law of Draco, which made inanimate objects punishable for destroying human existence. Nor was this law peculiar to Athens, where it was maintained in the legislation of Solon. For, as we see, it was recognised in Thasos. Now there is an apparent resemblance between this law and the English law of deodand, which involved the forfeiture, says Blackstone,<sup>2</sup> of "whatever personal chattel is the immediate cause of the death of any reasonable creature." But I think that, with much seeming similarity, the cases are essentially different. Deodand was originally a payment to the Sovereign to be applied to pious uses, and seems to have passed into a memorial right, or, in the Germanic codes,<sup>3</sup> into a compensation for homicide, payable to the surviving relatives. But it proceeded upon the principle of making owners pay; though they paid in respect of homicide effected through a material instrument. The Greek law inflicted punishment upon the inanimate matter itself, for having violated the sanctity of human life. In this essential point it exactly corresponded with the remarkable law of Moses, which said, "If an ox gore a man that he die, the ox shall be stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten."<sup>4</sup> But even this provision falls greatly short of the full spirit of the Greek law, since even the animal that kills is conscious, and gores from excited passion.

I pass, however, to a subject of larger scope, and I venture to suggest that the anthropomorphic spirit of the Greek religion was the source of that excellence in art, which has become to after ages a model for imitation, and a tribunal without appeal.

All are aware that the Greek religion was eminently

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, vi. 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Blackstone's *Commentaries*, i. 8, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Grote's *History of Greece*, ii. 10, and iii. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Exodus xxi. 28.

poetical; for it fulfilled in the most striking manner that condition which poetry above all requires, harmony in the relation between the worlds of soul and sense. Every river, fountain, grove, and hill was associated with the heart and imagination of the Greek; subject, however, always to the condition that they should appear as ruled by a presiding spirit, and that that spirit should be impersonated in the human shape. A poetical religion must, it seems, be favourable to art. The beauty of form which so much abounded in the country was also favourable to art. The Athenians, however, are stated not to have been beautiful; and at Sparta, where art was neglected, beauty was immensely prized. And, indeed, the personal beauty of a race is by no means usually found sufficient to produce the development of the fine arts; and as to the poetry of religion, and its bearing upon art, while a general connection may be admitted, it is very difficult to define the manner and degree. The practice of image-worship promotes the production of works, first rude and coarse, then more or less vulgar and tawdry. Over the whole continent of Europe there is scarcely at this moment an object of popular veneration which is worthy to be called a work of art. Of the finest remaining works of Greek art, not very many, I imagine, bear the mark of having been intended for worship. The great size required for statues like the Athene of the Parthenon and the Zeus of Olympia seems unfavourable to the exhibition of fine art in the highest sense.<sup>1</sup> In Pausanias we find notices of an immense number of statues in and about the temples: they are not commonly, I think, praised for excellence in this respect; and the mixture of materials, to which we find constant reference, could hardly have been chosen by the artist for the sake of his own proper purpose. I have heard Lord Macaulay give his opinion that this mixture in the Zeus of Phidias at Olympia, made of ivory and gold, simple as was that form of combination, may probably have been due to the necessity of condescension to the popular taste in con-

<sup>1</sup> The Zeus of Phidias at Olympia is stated to have been sixty feet high, and the Athene of the Parthenon forty.—Falkener's *Dædalus*, p. 94.

nection with an object of worship. Although, therefore, the highest artists were employed, it does not appear probable that they derived any part of their higher inspiration from the fervour or the multitude of the worshippers in the temples. Neither will it avail to urge the great esteem in which the professors of the arts were held. High indeed it was; and the successions of sculptors in the different schools<sup>1</sup> seem to have been recorded apparently with almost as much care as the Archons of Athens, or the Priestesses of Here at Argos, those landmarks of the history of States. But the question recurs, was their estimation the cause of their excellence, or was their excellence the cause of their estimation; and if the estimation flowed from the excellence, whence came the excellence itself? Both the one and the other were perhaps due to another cause.

That many accessories contributed to the wonderful result I do not doubt. But mainly and essentially, every art and method, every device and habit, in the language of Aristotle, has an end; and is modelled upon the end at which it aims; and by that end its greatness or its littleness is measured. Now the climax of all art, it seems to be agreed, is the rendering of the human form. What, then, could be so calculated to raise this representation to the acme of its excellence, as the belief that the human form was not only the tabernacle, but the original and proper shape, the inseparable attribute, of Deity itself? In the quaint language of George Herbert,

He that aims the moon  
Shoots higher much, than he that means a tree.

And again as Tennyson has sung:

It was my duty to have loved the highest:  
We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
Not Lancelot, nor another.<sup>2</sup>

It was this perpetual presentation of the highest to the

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, in divers passages.

<sup>2</sup> *Idylls of the King: Guinevere.*

mind of the Greek artist, that cheered him, and rewarded him, and yet, while it cheered him and rewarded him, still ever spurred him on in his pursuit. Whatever he had done, more remained to do,

*Nil actum reputans dum quid superesset agendum.*

The desire of ambition was fulfilled: he had always more worlds to conquer. The divine was made familiar to him, by correspondence of shape; but on the other side, its elements, which it was his business to draw forth and indicate to men, reached far away into the infinite. And I know not what true definition there is for any age or people of the highest excellence in any kind, unless it be perpetual effort upwards in pursuit of an object higher than ourselves, higher than our works, higher even than our hopes, yet beckoning us on from hour to hour, and always permitting us to apprehend in part.

I venture then to propound for consideration the opinion, that the fundamental cause of the transcendent excellence of the Greek artist lay in his being, by his birth and the tradition of his people, as well as with every favouring accessory, both in idea and in form, and in such a sense as no other artist was, a worker upon deity, conceived as residing in the human form.

It is hardly necessary to observe how the rich and many-sided composition of the Greek mythology favoured the artist in his work, by answering to the many-sided development of the mind and life of man.

Unconsciously then to himself, and in a sphere of almost parochial narrowness, the Greek not only earned himself an immortal fame, but was equipping from age to age a great School of Art, to furnish principles and models made ready to the hand of that purer and higher civilisation which was to be; and over the preparation of which, all the while, Divine Providence was brooding, like the Spirit on the face of the waters, till the fulness of time should come.

But besides the Art and the Poetry of the Greeks, there were other provinces in which their achievements were no

less remarkable; and, with reference to the present argument, I must shortly touch upon their philosophy.

The first philosophers of the Greek race were not for the most part natives and inhabitants of Greece, nor subject exclusively to Greek influences. Their speculations turned mainly on the nature of the first principle, and partook of an eastern spirit. But when philosophy took up her abode in the country where Hellenism was supreme and without a rival, that human element, which lay so profoundly embedded in the whole constitution of the Hellenic mind, unfolded itself in the region of speculative thought; and the true meaning of the famous saying that Socrates called down philosophy from Heaven would seem to be, that he gave expression to the genius of his country by propounding, as the prime subject for the study of man, the nature, constitution, and destiny of man himself. And the illustrious series of disciples, some of them probably greater than their master, who followed his example, were not therein aping or adopting the mere peculiarity of an individual, but obeying a congenial impulse that sprang from the depths of their being. Whatever philosophy was to be indigenous in Greece could not but be predominantly and profoundly human; and their power and fame, as analysts of our unfathomable constitution, are fresh and unabated at the present hour. Fashion may wave her wand, but it is with small result. Idolatrous veneration, of course, has at times begotten temporary reaction and neglect; but the power of Greek culture seems again and again to assert itself by virtue of the law which makes all things find their level, and since it came into existence it has never ceased to be in the most instructed periods the chief criterion and means of the highest intellectual training: not, of course, necessarily for each individual, but for classes and for countries.

The point, however, to which I wish to draw particular attention at this moment, is the large and well-balanced view, to which Greek Philosophy attained, of the compound nature of man.

Never, probably, has there appeared upon the stage of the world so remarkable an union, as in the Greeks, of

corporal with mental excellence. From the beginning of the race, Homer shared the privilege of his most gorgeous epithet<sup>1</sup> between battle and debate. The *Odes* of such a poet as Pindar, handing onwards the tradition of the Twenty-third *Iliad*, commemorate, so to speak, the marriage of athletic exercise with the gift of Song. We do not trace among the Greeks that contrast, which is found so rude and sharp elsewhere, between energy in the body and energy in the brain. The Greek was in this respect like Adam in the noble verse of Milton,

For contemplation and for valour born.

And the Greek philosophy was for nothing more remarkable than the manner in which it not only asserted but felt, as an elementary law, the place of the Body in human education.

This was with no exclusive or peculiar view to what we should call utilitarian purposes, such as those of defence or industry, or even art. It seems to have been rather an ample recognition of the right of the body to be cared for, and to be reared in its various organs up to the highest excellence it is capable of attaining, as being, what indeed it is, not a mere vesture, or tool, or appendage of the soul, but, like the soul, an integral part of man himself.

This plenitude and accuracy of view on such a subject is the more to be regarded on some special grounds. In general, the philosophies of the world, outside of Christianity, have shown a tendency to fluctuate between sensuality on the one hand, and on the other a contempt and hatred of matter, and a disposition to identify it with the principle of evil. The philosophy of Socrates, of Plato, and of Aristotle, seems to have steered clear and safe between this Scylla and this Charybdis. But again, the Greek saw, as all men see, the body parted from the soul at death, and hastening rapidly, as by the law of its nature, to corruption. To none could this severance, and its mournful and painful incidents, be more repulsive than to him, with his delicate perceptions and his lively emotions. Of a future existence

<sup>1</sup> *κυδαινερα*. *Il.* i. 490 ; *iv.* 225, *et alibi*.

in any shape he usually knew or even surmised little ; of the revival of the body, or of the reunion hereafter of the two great factors of the human being, he had yet less conception. 'We may say then that he lay under every temptation to a disparaging view of the body and of its office. Yet, in spite of his immense disadvantage, it fell to him to find a place for the body in the philosophy of human nature, and to incorporate the principle thus conceived in laws, usages, and institutions, with a clearness and general justness of view, by which Christian learning has done and will yet do well to profit. What with us is somewhat dubious and fluctuating both in theory and in practice, with him was familiar and elementary in both ; and the teachers of mental accomplishment taught also the science, if not the art, of bodily excellence.

Thus for example Plato, in his *Treatise on the State*, has to consider what men are fit to be chosen for rulers. They should if possible, he says, have the advantage of personal beauty. They must be energetic ; and he therefore proceeds to treat of the character of the φιλόπρονος,<sup>1</sup> or diligent man. He must be ready and keen in study ; for human souls are much more cowardly in strong studies than in exercises of corporal strength : as in the former they bear all the burden, instead of sharing it with the body. But philosophy itself, he admits, has fallen into some dishonour, from a tendency to partiality in handling this question. The truly diligent man, then, must not be halt or one-sided in his diligence. If he be fond of athletic exercise and of sports, but not apt for learning and inquiry, then he is but half-diligent. And no less "lame" will he be, says the philosopher, if, addicted to mental pursuits, he neglects the training of the body, and of the organs with which it is endowed. This may serve for a sample, but it is a sample only, of the large and complete grasp of the Greek philosophy upon the nature of man ; and I connect this largeness and completeness with the fact that the Greek, from the nature of his religion, cherished in a special degree the idea of the near association of human existence, in soul

<sup>1</sup> Plat. *de Rep.* bk. vii. p. 535.

and body, with that existence which we necessarily regard as the largest and most complete, namely with the Divine.

It may indeed be said, that the Greek lowered and contaminated the Divine idea by weak and by vile elements carried into it from the human. Yes: this and much more may be said, and said with truth. Nothing can be more humbling or more instructive, than the total failure of the Greek mind with all its powers either to attain or even to make progress towards attaining the greater ends of creation by rendering man either good or happy. This is the negative but most important purpose, which the Greek of old may have been destined to fulfil; the purpose of casting down the strongholds of our pride, by first showing us how great he is, and then leaving us to see how little, when standing alone, is all his greatness, if it be measured with reference to its results in accomplishing those ends of life, without which every other end is vain. But I am not now engaged in endeavouring to ascertain what Greek life or what the Greek mind was in itself, and for itself; nor for what negative or secondary uses the study of it may be available. I wish to point out in some degree what it was for a purpose beyond itself, what materials it was preparing for our use, how it was, if I may so express myself, the secular counterpart of the Gospel; and how it became, in one word, the great intellectual factor of the Christian civilisation.

Now it is not, I think, difficult to see that materials and instruments, such as it furnished, were required. I will not attempt by argument to show, that all the powers and capacities of man, being the work of God, must have their proper place in His designs; and that the evil in the world arises not from their use but from their misuse, not from their active working each according to its place in the Providential order, but from their having gone astray, as the planets would if the centripetal force, that controls their action, were withdrawn.

We see then in the Greeks, beyond all question, these two things: first, a peculiar and powerful element of anthropomorphism pervading their religion, and giving it its



distinctive character ; secondly, a remarkable fulness, largeness, subtlety, elevation, and precision in their conception of human nature ; taking form in, or at least accompanying, an immense vigour both of speculation and of action ; a language of marvellous reach, elasticity, variety, and power ; a scientific excellence in art never elsewhere attained ; and an eminence in the various branches of letters which has given to them, for more than two thousand years, the place of first authority in the cultivated world. The Latin literature, though it has both a character and a purpose of its own, is, in its most splendid elements, derivative from the Greek.

Now, if we survey with care and candour the present wealth of the world—I mean its wealth intellectual, moral, and spiritual—we find that Christianity has not only contributed to the patrimony of man its brightest and most precious jewels, but has likewise been what our Saviour pronounced it, the salt or preserving principle of all the residue, and has maintained his health, so far as it has been maintained at all, against corrupting agencies. But the salt is one thing, the thing salted is another ; and, as in the world of nature, so in the world of mind and of human action, there is much that is outside of Christianity, that harmonises with it, that revolves, so to speak, around it, but that did not and could not grow out of it. It seems to have been for the filling up of this outline, for the occupation of this broad sphere of exertion and enjoyment, that the Greeks were, in the councils of Providence, ordained to labour ; that so the Gospel, produced in the fulness of time, after the world's long gestation, might have its accomplished work in rearing mankind up to his perfection, first in the spiritual life, but also, and through that spiritual life, in every form of excellence, for which his varied powers and capacities have been created.

If this be so, it is quite plain that the Greeks have their place in the Providential order, ay, and in the Evangelical Preparation, as truly and really as the children of Abraham themselves.

But indeed there is no need, in order to a due appreciation of our debt to the ancient Greeks, that we should

either forget or disparage the function which was assigned by the Almighty Father to His most favoured people. Much profit, says St. Paul, had the Jew in every way. He had the oracles of God; he had the custody of the promises; he was the steward of the great and fundamental conception of the unity of God, the sole and absolute condition under which the Divine idea could be upheld among men at its just elevation. No poetry, no philosophy, no art of Greece ever embraced, in its most soaring and widest conceptions, that simple law of love towards God and towards our neighbour, on which "two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," and which supplied the moral basis of the new dispensation. There is one history, and that the most touching and most profound of all, for which we should search in vain through all the pages of the classics,—I mean the history of the human soul in its relations with its Maker; the history of its sin, and grief, and death, and of the way of its recovery to hope and life, and to enduring joy. For the exercises of strength and skill, for the achievements and for the enchantments of wit, of eloquence, of art, of genius, for the imperial games of politics and war, let us seek them on the shores of Greece. But if the first among the problems of life be how to establish the peace and restore the balance of our inward being; if the highest of all conditions in the existence of the creature be his aspect towards the God to whom he owes his being, and in whose great hand he stands; then let us make our search elsewhere. All the wonders of the Greek civilisation heaped together are less wonderful than is the single Book of Psalms. Palestine was weak and despised, always obscure, oftentimes and long trodden down beneath the feet of imperious masters. Greece for a thousand years,

Confident from foreign purposes,<sup>1</sup>

repelled every invader from her shores, and, fostering her strength in the keen air of freedom, she defied, and at length overthrew, the mightiest of empires; and when finally she felt the resistless grasp of the masters of all the

<sup>1</sup> *King John*, ii. 1.

world, them too, at the very moment of her subjugation, she subdued to her literature, language, arts, and manners.<sup>1</sup> Palestine, in a word, had no share of the glories of our race; they blaze on every page of the history of Greece with an overpowering splendour. Greece had valour, policy, renown, genius, wisdom, wit,—she had all, in a word, that this world could give her; but the flowers of Paradise, which blossom thinly, blossomed in Palestine alone.

And yet, as the lower parts of our bodily organisation are not less material than the higher to the safety and well-being of the whole, so Christianity itself was not ordained to a solitary existence in man, but to find helps meet for it in the legitimate use of every faculty, and in the gradually accumulated treasures of the genius, sagacity, and industry of the human family.

Besides the loftiest part of the work of Providence entrusted to the Hebrew race, there was other work to do, and it was done elsewhere. It was requisite to make ready the materials not only of a divine renewal and of a moral harmony for the world, but also for a thorough and searching culture of every power and gift of man, in all his relations to the world and to his kind; so as to lift up his universal nature to the level upon which his relation as a creature to his Creator, and as a child to his Father, was about to be established.

And the question arises whether, among the auxiliaries required to complete the training process for our race, there were not to be found some which were of a quality, I will not say to act as a corrective to Christianity, but to act as a corrective to the narrow views and the excesses which might follow upon certain modes of conceiving and

<sup>1</sup> It has been, perhaps, too little noticed that the expedition of Alexander, by carrying not only the political, but especially the intellectual, dominion of Greece through the East, was no less signally a Preparation for the Gospel than was the growth of the Roman Power, which placed the civilised world under the sway of a single sceptre (*S. Aug. de Civ. Dei*, bk. xviii. c. 22). The dissolution of Alexander's empire after his death has made us take for a short-lived, meteor-like phenomenon what really was a great work, with results not less permanent than widespread. Its importance reached a climax in the Translation of the Jewish Scriptures executed by the Seventy.

of applying it. Doubtless the just idea of their general purpose is that they were a collection of implements and materials to assist in the cultivation of the entire nature of man, and to consecrate all his being to the glory and the designs of his Maker. Yet in part they might have a purpose more special still,—the purpose of assigning due bounds to the action of impulses springing out of Christianity itself.

Now, that narrow conception, which I have mentioned, of the Jews as virtually the sole object of the Providential designs of God, while it began doubtless in a devout sentiment, passed into superstition when it led men to assign to the Jewish people every imaginable gift and accomplishment, and into virtual impiety when it came to imply that the Almighty had little care for the residue of His creatures. And certainly it was not to Scripture itself that opinions like these were due. In a *Dissertation On the Prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the Heathen*, Bishop Horsley has shown what a large amount of testimony is yielded by the Sacred Books to the remaining knowledge of the true God among the races in the neighbourhood of Judæa. With them religion seems to have been for long periods, as was also to no small extent the religious practice of the Jews, an inconsistent combination of lingering and struggling truth with rampant error. Melchisedec, the type of Christ, Job, one of the chosen patrons of faith and patience, were of blood foreign to the patriarchal race; and the same agency of the prophetic order, which was employed to correct and guide the Jew, was not withheld from his neighbours: Balaam, among the Moabites, was a prophet inspired by the Most High. Of the minor prophetic books of the Old Testament two are expressly devoted to setting forth the burden of Nineveh and the dealings of God with its inhabitants; and Eastern Magi were, in the words of Bishop Horsley, "the first worshippers of Mary's Holy Child."<sup>1</sup>

A system of religion, however absolutely perfect for its purpose, however divine in its conception and expression,

<sup>1</sup> Horsley's *Dissertation*, etc. p. 117.

yet of necessity becomes human too, from the first moment of its contact with humanity; from the very time, that is to say, when it begins to do its proper work by laying hold upon the hearts and minds of men, mingling, as the leaven in the dough, with all that they contain, and unfolding and applying itself in the life and conduct of the individual, and in the laws, institutions, and usages of society. In the building up of the human temple, the several portions of the work, while sustaining and strengthening each other, confine each other also, like the stones of a wall, to their proper place and office in the fabric.

Divine truth contained in the Gospel is addressed to the wants and uses of a nature not simple but manifold, and is manifold itself; though dependent upon one principle it consists of many parts, and in order to preserve reciprocally the due place and balance of those parts, means that we call human are available, as well as means more obviously divine; and secular forms and social influences, all adjusted by one and the same Governor of the world, are made to serve the purposes that have their highest expression in the Kingdom of Grace. The Gospel aims not at destroying this equilibrium, but at restoring it; and in the restoration it accepts, nay courts, and by natural law requires, the aid of secondary means.

It is manifest indeed that there was in Christianity that which man might easily and innocently carry into such an excess, as, though it would have ceased to be Christian, would not have ceased to seem so, and would under a sacred title have tended to impair the healthful and complete development of his being.

Rousseau<sup>1</sup> objects to the Christian system that it is opposed to social good order and prosperity, because it teaches a man to regard himself as a citizen of another world, and thus diverts him from the performance of his duties as a member of civil society. "Far from attaching the hearts of the citizens to the state, it detaches them from it, as from all other earthly things. I know nothing more opposed to the social spirit. . . . A society of true Chris-

<sup>1</sup> Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, bk. iv. c. viii.

tians would no longer be a society of men. . . . What matters it to be free or slave in this vale of misery? The one thing needful is to go to Paradise, and submission to calamity is an additional means of getting there."

In an age and in a country such as this, it is not required, it is scarcely allowable, to seem to depreciate those various forms of self-restraint and self-conquest which the spirit of man, vexed in its sore conflict with the flesh and with the world, has in other times employed to establish the supremacy of the soul, by trampling upon sense and appetite and all corporal existence. Even in the time of the Apostles, it seems to have been manifest that a tendency to excess in this direction had begun to operate in the Christian Church. As time passed on, and as the spirit of the unrenewed world became more rampant within the sacred precinct, the reaction against it likewise grew more vehement and eager. The deserts of Egypt were peopled with thousands upon thousands of anchorites,<sup>1</sup> who forswore every human relation, extinguished every appetite, and absorbed every motive, every idea, every movement of our complex nature in the great but single function of the relation to the unseen world.<sup>2</sup> True and earnest in their Christian warfare, they notwithstanding represent a spirit of exaggeration, which it was requisite to check, uprooting what they ought rather to have pruned, and destroying what they ought to have chastised, and mastered, and converted to purposes of good. That internecine war with sin, which is of the very essence of Christianity, seems to have been

<sup>1</sup> Vividly described by Lecky, *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii. p. 28. The same principle runs through Church History: as where the admirable Mère Marie-Angélique Arnauld describes the Infirmarys in her convent as "basses et humides comme des caves," making the nuns ill, and yet "cela ne les dégoutoit point. Dieu nous en envoya plusieurs" (*Relations du Port Royal*, p. 30).

<sup>2</sup> Saint Augustine says of the body, *ad ipsam naturam hominis pertinet* (*de Civ. Dei*, i. 13). Eusebius in his account of the Hebrew religion shows a tendency to depreciate this constituent part of man, when he relates that they viewed it simply as a space for the soul to dwell in (τὸ δὲ, τούτων χώραν περιβολῆς ἐπέχειν), and says all bodily pleasures are no higher than those of the brute creation (bk. v. c. 4). Saint Augustine had felt deeply the influence of the Greek philosophy, and hence perhaps it is that with his warmly-coloured views he combined so much breadth of conception.

understood by them as a war against the whole visible and sensible world, against the intellectual life, against a great portion of their own normal nature; and though as regarded themselves, even their exaggeration was pardonable and in many respects a noble error, yet its unrestricted sway and extension would have left man a maimed, a stunted, a distorted creature. And it would have done more than this. By severing the Gospel from all else that is beautiful and glorious in creation, it would have exposed the spiritual teacher to a resistance not only vehement but just, and would have placed the kingdom of grace in permanent and hopeless discord with the kingdoms of nature, reason, truth, and beauty, kingdoms established by the very same Almighty Hand.

Those principles of repression, which were indispensable as the medicine of man, were unfit for his food. What was requisite, however, was not to expel them, and thereby to revert to the mental riot and the moral uncleanness of heathenism, but to check their usurpations, and to keep them within their bounds; and this was to be effected not by prohibition or disparagement, but by vindicating for every part, and power, and work of human nature, and for every office of life, its proper place in the Divine order and constitution of the world. The seed of this comprehensive philosophy was supplied by the words of the Apostle: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."<sup>1</sup> And so the solid and fruitful materials of the Greek civilisation came in aid, by a wise Providence, of the humanising principles and precepts of the Gospel, to assist in securing a well-balanced development of the powers of the Christian system, and to prevent the instruments designed for eradicating the seeds of disease from subverting the yet higher agencies appointed for the fostering and development of life in every region of our being and our activity.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iv. 8.

Volumes might be written with profit to trace the application of the principles touched upon in this Address to the whole history of the Church, and of the Christian civilisation, down to the present day ; and the more we said, the more there would remain to say. That which I have now attempted is no more, in effect, than a suggestion, which may open the way for others into a wide and ever-widening field. And if that suggestion be just it will be difficult to deny its importance. Let us glance in a few concluding words at some of its results.

First, it places on high and safe grounds that genial primacy of the Greeks in letters and in human culture, to the acknowledgment of which Christian Europe has been guided not so much by a logical process, or a definite forethought, as by a sure instinct with the after confirmation of a long experience. Nor can this primacy be justly disturbed by the multiplication, and the energetic and growing pursuit, of those branches of knowledge for which this age has been so remarkable. For Aristotle it was excusable to regard the heavenly bodies as objects nobler than man. But Christianity has sealed and stamped the title of our race as the crown and flower of the visible creation ; and with this irreversible sentence in their favour, the studies, well called studies of humanity, should not resent nor fear. but should favour and encourage all other noble research having for its object the globe on which we live, the tribes with which it is peopled in land, air, and sea, the powers drawn forth from nature or yet latent in her unexplored recesses, or the spaces of that vast system—

*Ultra flammantia maenia mundi,*

to which our earth belongs.

But more than this : we live in times when the whole nature of our relation to the unseen world is widely, eagerly, and assiduously questioned. Sometimes we are told of general laws, so conceived as to be practically independent either of a Lawgiver or a Judge. Sometimes of a necessity working all things to uniform results, but seeming to crush and to bury under them the ruins of our will, our freedom,



our personal responsibility. Sometimes of a private judgment, which we are to hold upon the hard condition of taking nothing upon trust, of passing by, at the outset of our mental life, the whole preceding education of the world, of owning no debt to those who have gone before without a regular process of proof, in a word, of beginning anew each man for himself: a privilege which I had thought was restricted to the lower orders of creation, where the parent infuses no prejudices into its litter or its fry. Such are the fancies which go abroad. Such are the clouds which career in heaven, and pass between us and the sun, and make men idly think, that what they see not, is not, and blot the prospects of what is in so many and such true respects a happy and a hopeful age. It is, I think, an observation of Saint Augustine, that those periods are critical and formidable, when the power of putting questions runs greatly in advance of the pains to answer them. Such appears to be the period in which we live. And all among us, who are called in any manner to move in the world of thought, may well ask, Who is sufficient for these things? Who can with just and firm hand sever the transitory from the durable, and the accidental from the essential, in old opinions? Who can combine, in the measures which reason would prescribe, reverence and gratitude to the past with a sense of the new claims, new means, new duties of the present? Who can be stout and earnest to do battle for the Truth, and yet hold sacred, as he ought, the freedom of inquiry, and cherish, as he ought, a chivalry of controversy like the ancient chivalry of arms? One persuasion at least let us embrace: one error let us avoid. Let us be persuaded of this, that Christianity will by her inherent resources find for herself a philosophy equal to all the shifting and all the growing wants of the time. Let us avoid the error of seeking to cherish a Christianity of isolation. The Christianity which is now and hereafter to flourish, and, through its power in the inner circles of human thought, to influence ultimately, in some manner more adequate than now, the masses of mankind, must be such as of old the Wisdom of God was described:—

"For in her is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good, quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, kind to man, steadfast, sure, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things. . . .

"For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness."<sup>1</sup>

It must be filled full with human and genial warmth, in close sympathy with every true instinct and need of man, regardful of the just titles of every faculty of his nature, apt to associate with and make its own all, under whatever name, which goes to enrich and enlarge the patrimony of the race. And therefore it is well that we should look out over the field of history, and see if haply its records, the more they are unfolded, do or do not yield us new materials for the support of faith. Me at least, for one, experience has convinced that, just as fresh wonder and confirmed conviction flow from examining the structure of the universe and its countless inhabitants, and their respective adaptations to the purposes of their being and to the use of man, the same results will flow in yet larger measure from tracing the footmarks of the Most High in the seemingly bewildered paths of human history. Everywhere, before us, and behind us, and around us, and above us and beneath, we shall find the Power which—

Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.<sup>2</sup>

And, together with the Power, we shall find the Goodness and the Wisdom, of which that sublime Power is but a minister. Nor can that wisdom and that goodness anywhere shine forth with purer splendour, than when the Divine forethought, working from afar, in many places, and through many generations, so adjusts beforehand the acts and the affairs of men, as to let them all converge upon a single point, upon that redemption of the world, by God made

<sup>1</sup> *Wisdom of Solomon*, viii. 22, 23, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Pope's *Essay on Man*, iv.

Man, in which all the rays of His glory are concentrated, and from which they pour forth a flood of healing light even over the darkest and saddest places of creation.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Professors, and Gentlemen, I commend to your notice and your impartial research the subject of the foregoing remarks. It is at least a less unworthy offering than the mere commonplaces of taking leave. Yet I claim one remaining moment to convey to you my gratitude for your confidence, to assure you that I shall ever feel a lively interest in all that pertains to the welfare of your famous University, and to bid you respectfully farewell.

**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THOMAS CARLYLE**

**LORD RECTOR**

**APRIL 2, 1866**



GENTLEMEN—I have accepted the office you have elected me to, and it is now my duty to return thanks for the great honour done me. Your enthusiasm towards me, I must admit, is in itself very beautiful, however undeserved it may be in regard to the object of it. It is a feeling honourable to all men, and one well known to myself when I was of an age like yours, nor is it yet quite gone. I can only hope that, with you too, it may endure to the end,—this noble desire to honour those whom you think worthy of honour; and that you will come to be more and more select and discriminate in the choice of the object of it:—for I can well understand that you will modify your opinions of me and of many things else, as you go on. It is now fifty-six years, gone last November, since I first entered your City, a boy of not quite fourteen; to “attend the classes” here, and gain knowledge of all kinds, I could little guess what, my poor mind full of wonder and awe-struck expectation; and now, after a long course, this is what we have come to. There is something touching and tragic, and yet at the same time beautiful, to see, as it were, the third generation of my dear old native land rising up and saying, “Well, you are not altogether an unworthy labourer in the vineyard; you have toiled through a great variety of fortunes, and have had many judges: this is our judgment of you!” As the old proverb says, “He that builds by the wayside has many masters.” We must expect a variety of judges; but the voice of young Scotland, through you, is really of some value to me; and I return you many thanks for it,—though I cannot go into describing my emotions to you, and perhaps they will be much more perfectly conceivable if expressed in silence.

When this office was first proposed to me, some of you know I was not very ambitious to accept it, but had my doubts rather. I was taught to believe that there were certain more or less important duties which would lie in my power. This, I confess, was my chief motive in going into it, and overcoming the objections I felt to such things: if I could do anything to serve my dear old *Alma Mater* and you, why should not I? Well, but on practically looking into the matter when the office actually came into my hands, I find it grows more and more uncertain and abstruse to me whether there is much real duty that I can do at all. I live four hundred miles away from you, in an entirely different scene of things; and my weak health, with the burden of the many years now accumulating on me, and my total unacquaintance with such subjects as concern your affairs here,—all this fills me with apprehension that there is really nothing worth the least consideration that I can do on that score. You may depend on it, however, that if any such duty does arise in any form, I will use my most faithful endeavour to do in it whatever is right and proper, according to the best of my judgment.

Meanwhile, the duty I at present have,—which might be very pleasant, but which is not quite so, for reasons you may fancy,—is to address some words to you, if possible not quite useless, nor incongruous to the occasion, and on subjects more or less cognate to the pursuits you are engaged in. Accordingly, I mean to offer you some loose observations, loose in point of order, but the truest I have, in such form as they may present themselves; certain of the thoughts that are in me about the business you are here engaged in, what kind of race it is that you young gentlemen have started on, and what sort of arena you are likely to find in this world. I ought, I believe, according to custom, to have written all that down on paper, and had it read out. That would have been much handier for me at the present moment;—but on attempting the thing, I found I was not used to write speeches, and that I didn't get on very well. So I flung that aside; and could only resolve to trust, in all superficial respects, to the suggestion

of the moment, as you now see. You will therefore have to accept what is readiest; what comes direct from the heart; and you must just take that in compensation for any good order or arrangement there might have been in it. I will endeavour to say nothing that is not true, so far as I can manage; and that is pretty much all I can engage for.

Advices, I believe, to young men, as to all men, are very seldom much valued. There is a great deal of advising, and very little faithful performing; and talk that does not end in any kind of action is better suppressed altogether. I would not, therefore, go much into advising; but there is one advice I must give you. In fact, it is the summary of all advices, and doubtless you have heard it a thousand times; but I must nevertheless let you hear it the thousand-and-first time, for it is most intensely true, whether you will believe it at present or not:—namely, That above all things the interest of your whole life depends on your being *diligent*, now while it is called to-day, in this place where you have come to get education! Diligent: that includes in it all virtues that a student can have; I mean it to include all those qualities of conduct that lead on to the acquirement of real instruction and improvement in such a place. If you will believe me, you who are young, yours is the golden season of life. As you have heard it called, so it verily is, the seed-time of life; in which, if you do not sow, or if you sow tares instead of wheat, you cannot expect to reap well afterwards, and you will arrive at little. And in the course of years, when you come to look back, if you have not done what you have heard from your advisers,—and among many counsellors there is wisdom,—you will bitterly repent when it is too late. The habits of study acquired at Universities are of the highest importance in after-life. At the season when you are young in years, the whole mind is, as it were, fluid, and is capable of forming itself into any shape that the owner of the mind pleases to allow it, or constrain it, to form itself into. The mind is then in a plastic or fluid state; but it hardens gradually, to the consistency of rock or of iron, and you cannot alter



the habits of an old man : he, as he has begun, so he will proceed and go on to the last.

By diligence, I mean, among other things, and very chiefly too,—honesty, in all your inquiries, and in all you are about. Pursue your studies in the way your conscience can name honest. More and more endeavour to do that. Keep, I should say for one thing, an accurate separation between what you have really come to know in your minds and what is still unknown. Leave all that latter on the hypothetical side of the barrier, as things afterwards to be acquired, if acquired at all ; and be careful not to admit a thing as known when you do not yet know it. Count a thing known only when it is imprinted clearly on your mind, and has become transparent to you, so that you may survey it on all sides with intelligence. There is such a thing as a man endeavouring to persuade himself, and endeavouring to persuade others, that he knows things, when he does not know more than the outside skin of them ; and yet he goes flourishing about with them. There is also a process called cramming, in some Universities,—that is, getting-up such points of things as the examiner is likely to put questions about. Avoid all that, as entirely unworthy of an honourable mind. Be modest, and humble, and assiduous in your attention to what your teachers tell you, who are profoundly interested in trying to bring you forward in the right way, so far as they have been able to understand it. Try all things they set before you, in order, if possible, to understand them, and to follow and adopt them in proportion to their fitness for you. Gradually see what kind of work you individually can do ; it is the first of all problems for a man to find out what kind of work he is to do in this universe. In short, morality as regards study is, as in all other things, the primary consideration, and overrules all others. A dishonest man cannot do anything real ; he never will study with real fruit ; and perhaps it would be greatly better if he were tied up from trying it. He does nothing but darken counsel by the words he utters. That is a very old doctrine, but a very true one ; and you will find it confirmed by all the thinking men that have

ever lived in this long series of generations of which we are the latest.

I daresay you know, very many of you, that it is now some seven hundred years since Universities were first set-up in this world of ours. Abelard and other thinkers had arisen with doctrines in them which people wished to hear of, and students flocked towards them from all parts of the world. There was no getting the thing recorded in books, as you now may. You had to hear the man speaking to you vocally, or else you could not learn at all what it was that he wanted to say. And so they gathered together, these speaking ones,—the various people who had anything to teach;—and formed themselves gradually, under the patronage of kings and other potentates who were anxious about the culture of their populations, and nobly studious of their best benefit; and became a body-corporate, with high privileges, high dignities, and really high aims, under the title of a University.

Possibly too you may have heard it said that the course of centuries has changed all this; and that "the true University of our days is a Collection of Books." And beyond doubt, all this is greatly altered by the invention of Printing, which took place about midway between us and the origin of Universities. Men have not now to go in person to where a Professor is actually speaking; because in most cases you can get his doctrine out of him through a book; and can then read it, and read it again and again, and study it. That is an immense change, that one fact of Printed Books. And I am not sure that I know of any University in which the whole of that fact has yet been completely taken in, and the studies moulded in complete conformity with it. Nevertheless, Universities have, and will continue to have, an indispensable value in society;—I think, a very high, and it might be, almost the highest value. They began, as is well known, with their grand aim directed on Theology,—their eye turned earnestly on Heaven. And perhaps, in a sense, it may be still said, the very highest interests of man are virtually entrusted to them. In regard

to theology, as you are aware, it has been, and especially was then, the study of the deepest heads that have come into the world,—what is the nature of this stupendous Universe, and what are our relations to it, and to all things knowable by man, or known only to the great Author of man and it. Theology was once the name for all this ; all this is still alive for man, however dead the name may grow ! In fact, the members of the Church keeping theology in a lively condition for the benefit of the whole population, theology was the great object of the Universities. I consider it is the same intrinsically now, though very much forgotten, from many causes, and not so successful as might be wished, by any manner of means !

It remains, however, practically a most important truth, what I alluded to above, that the main use of Universities in the present age is that, after you have done with all your classes, the next thing is a collection of books, a great library of good books, which you proceed to study and to read. What the Universities can mainly do for you,—what I have found the University did for me, is, That it taught me to read, in various languages, in various sciences ; so that I could go into the books which treated of these things, and gradually penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of, as I found it suit me.

Well, Gentlemen, whatever you may think of these historical points, the clearest and most imperative duty lies on every one of you to be assiduous in your reading. Learn to be good readers,—which is perhaps a more difficult thing than you imagine. Learn to be discriminative in your reading ; to read faithfully, and with your best attention, all kinds of things which you have a real interest in, a real not an imaginary, and which you find to be really fit for what you are engaged in. Of course, at the present time, in a great deal of the reading incumbent on you, you must be guided by the books recommended by your Professors for assistance towards the effect of their prelections. And then, when you leave the University, and go into studies of your own, you will find it very important that you have chosen

a field, some province specially suited to you, in which you can study and work. The most unhappy of all men is the man who cannot tell what he is going to do, who has got no work cut-out for him in the world, and does not go into it. For work is the grand cure of all the maladies and miseries that ever beset mankind,—honest work, which you intend getting done.

If, in any vacant vague time, you are in a strait as to choice of reading,—a very good indication for you, perhaps the best you could get, is towards some book you have a great curiosity about. You are then in the readiest and best of all possible conditions to improve by that book. It is analogous to what doctors tell us about the physical health and appetites of the patient. You must learn, however, to distinguish between false appetite and true. There is such a thing as a false appetite, which will lead a man into vagaries with regard to diet; will tempt him to eat spicy things, which he should not eat at all, nor would, but that the things are toothsome, and that he is under a momentary baseness of mind. A man ought to examine and find out what he really and truly has an appetite for, what suits his constitution and condition; and that, doctors tell him, is in general the very thing he ought to have. And so with books.

As applicable to all of you, I will say that it is highly expedient to go into History; to inquire into what has passed before you on this Earth, and in the Family of Man.

The history of the Romans and Greeks will first of all concern you; and you will find that the classical knowledge you have got will be extremely applicable to elucidate that. There you have two of the most remarkable races of men in the world set before you, calculated to open innumerable reflections and considerations; a mighty advantage, if you can achieve it;—to say nothing of what their two languages will yield you, which your Professors can better explain; model languages, which are universally admitted to be the most perfect forms of speech we have yet found to exist among men. And you will find, if you read well, a pair of extremely remarkable nations, shining in the records left

by themselves, as a kind of beacon, or solitary mass of illumination, to light-up some noble forms of human life for us, in the otherwise utter darkness of the past ages ; and it will be well worth your while if you can get into the understanding of what these people were, and what they did. You will find a great deal of hearsay, of empty rumour and tradition, which does not touch on the matter ; but perhaps some of you will get to see the old Roman and the old Greek face to face ; you will know in some measure how they contrived to exist, and to perform their feats in the world.

I believe, also, you will find one important thing not much noted, That there was a very great deal of deep religion in both nations. This is pointed out by the wiser kind of historians, and particularly by Ferguson, who is very well worth reading on Roman History,—and who, I believe, was an alumnus of our own University. His book is a very creditable work. He points out the profoundly religious nature of the Roman people, notwithstanding their ruggedly positive, defiant and fierce ways. They believed that Jupiter Optimus Maximus was lord of the universe, and that he had appointed the Romans to become the chief of nations, provided they followed his commands,—to brave all danger, all difficulty, and stand up with an invincible front, and be ready to do and die ; and also to have the same sacred regard to truth of promise, to thorough veracity, thorough integrity, and all the virtues that accompany that noblest quality of man, valour,—to which latter the Romans gave the name of “ virtue ” proper (*virtus*, manhood), as the crown and summary of all that is ennobling for a man. In the literary ages of Rome this religious feeling had very much decayed away ; but it still retained its place among the lower classes of the Roman people.<sup>1</sup> Of the deeply religious nature of the Greeks, along with their beautiful and sunny effulgences of art, you have striking proof, if you look for it. In the tragedies of Sophocles there is a most deep-toned recognition of the eternal justice of Heaven, and the unfailing punishment of crime against the laws of God.<sup>1</sup> I believe you will find in all histories of nations, that this

has been at the origin and foundation of them all ; and that no nation which did not contemplate this wonderful universe with an awestricken and reverential belief that there was a great unknown, omnipotent, and all-wise and all-just Being, superintending all men in it, and all interests in it,—no nation ever came to very much, nor did any man either, who forgot that. If a man did forget that, he forgot the most important part of his mission in this world.

Our own history of England, which you will naturally take a great deal of pains to make yourselves acquainted with, you will find beyond all others worthy of your study. For indeed I believe that the British nation,—including in that the Scottish nation,—produced a finer set of men than any you will find it possible to get anywhere else in the world. I don't know in any history of Greece or Rome, where you will get so fine a man as Oliver Cromwell, for example. And we too have had men worthy of memory, in our little corner of the Island here, as well as others ; and our history has had its heroic features all along ; and did become great at last in being connected with world-history :—for if you examine well, you will find that John Knox was the author, as it were, of Oliver Cromwell ; that the Puritan revolution never would have taken place in England at all, had it not been for that Scotchman. That is an authentic fact, and is not prompted by national vanity on my part, but will stand examining.

In fact, if you look at the struggle that was then going on in England, as I have had to do in my time, you will see that people were overawed by the immense impediments lying in the way. A small minority of God-fearing men in that country were flying away, with any ship they could get, to New England, rather than take the lion by the beard. They durst not confront the powers with their most just complaints, and demands to be delivered from idolatry. They wanted to make the nation altogether conformable to the Hebrew Bible, which they, and all men, understood to be the exact transcript of the Will of God ;—and could there be, for man, a more legitimate aim ? Nevertheless, it would have been impossible in their circumstances, and not to be

attempted at all, had not Knox succeeded in it here, some fifty years before, by the firmness and nobleness of his mind. For he also is of the select of the earth to me,—John Knox. What he has suffered from the ungrateful generations that have followed him should really make us humble ourselves to the dust, to think that the most excellent man our country has produced, to whom we owe everything that distinguishes us among the nations, should have been so sneered at, misknown, and abused. Knox was heard by Scotland; the people heard him, believed him to the marrow of their bones: they took up his doctrine, and they defied principalities and powers to move them from it. “We must have it,” they said; “we will and must!” It was in this state of things that the Puritan struggle arose in England; and you know well how the Scottish earls and nobility, with their tenantry, marched away to Dunse Hill in 1639, and sat down there: just at the crisis of that struggle, when it was either to be suppressed or brought into greater vitality, they encamped on Dunse Hill,—thirty-thousand armed men, drawn out for that occasion, each regiment round its landlord, its earl, or whatever he might be called, and zealous all of them “For Christ’s Crown and Covenant.” That was the signal for all England’s rising up into unappeasable determination to have the Gospel there also; and you know it went on, and came to be a contest whether the Parliament or the King should rule; whether it should be old formalities and use-and-wont, or something that had been of new conceived in the souls of men, namely, a divine determination to walk according to the laws of God here, as the sum of all prosperity; which of these should have the mastery: and after a long, long agony of struggle, it was decided—the way we know.

I should say also of that Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell’s, notwithstanding the censures it has encountered, and the denial of everybody that it could continue in the world, and so on, it appears to me to have been, on the whole, the most salutary thing in the modern history of England. If

Oliver Cromwell had continued it out, I don't know what it would have come to. It would have got corrupted probably in other hands, and could not have gone on; but it was pure and true, to the last fibre, in his mind; there was perfect truth in it while he ruled over it.

Macchiavelli has remarked, in speaking of the Romans, that Democracy cannot long exist anywhere in the world; that as a mode of government, of national management or administration, it involves an impossibility, and after a little while must end in wreck. And he goes on proving that, in his own way. I do not ask you all to follow him in that conviction,—but it is to him a clear truth; he considers it a solecism and impossibility that the universal mass of men should ever govern themselves. He has to admit of the Romans, that they continued a long time; but believes it was purely in virtue of this item in their constitution, namely, of their all having the conviction in their minds that it was solemnly necessary, at times, to appoint a Dictator; a man who had the power of life and death over everything, who degraded men out of their places, ordered them to execution, and did whatever seemed to him good in the name of God above him. He was commanded to take care that the republic suffer no detriment. And Macchiavelli calculates that this was the thing which purified the social system from time to time, and enabled it to continue as it did. Probable enough, if you consider it. And an extremely proper function surely, this of a Dictator, if the republic was composed of little other than bad and tumultuous men, triumphing in general over the better, and all going the bad road, in fact. Well, Oliver Cromwell's Protectorate, or Directorate if you will let me name it so, lasted for about ten years, and you will find that nothing which was contrary to the laws of Heaven was allowed to live by Oliver.

For example, it was found by his Parliament of Notables, what they call the "Barebones Parliament,"—the most zealous of all Parliaments probably,—that the Court of Chancery in England was in a state which was really capable of no apology; no man could get up and say that



that was a right court. There were, I think, fifteen-thousand, or fifteen-hundred,—I really don't remember which, but we will call it by the latter number, to be safe;—there were fifteen-hundred cases lying in it undecided; and one of them, I remember, for a large amount of money, was eighty-three years old, and it was going on still; wigs were wagging over it, and lawyers were taking their fees, and there was no end of it. Upon view of all which, the Barebones people, after deliberation about it, thought it was expedient, and commanded by the Author of Man and Fountain of Justice, and in the name of what was true and right, to abolish said court. Really, I don't know who could have dissented from that opinion. At the same time, it was thought by those who were wiser in their generation and had more experience of the world, that this was a very dangerous thing, and wouldn't suit at all. The lawyers began to make an immense noise about it. All the public, the great mass of solid and well-disposed people who had got no deep insight into such matters, were very adverse to it: and the Speaker of the Parliament, old Sir Francis Rous,—who translated the Psalms for us, those that we sing here every Sunday in the Church yet; a very good man, and a wise and learned, Provost of Eton College afterwards,—he got a great number of the Parliament to go to Oliver the Dictator, and lay down their functions altogether, and declare officially, with their signature, on Monday morning, that the Parliament was dissolved. The act of abolition had been passed on Saturday night; and on Monday morning Rous came and said, "We cannot carry-on the affair any longer, and we remit it into the hands of your Highness." Oliver in that way became Protector, virtually in some sort a Dictator, for the first time.

And I give you this as an instance that Oliver did faithfully set to doing a Dictator's function, and of his prudence in it as well. Oliver felt that the Parliament, now dismissed, had been perfectly right with regard to Chancery, and that there was no doubt of the propriety of abolishing Chancery, or else reforming it in some kind of way. He considered the matter, and this is what he did.

He assembled fifty or sixty of the wisest lawyers to be found in England. Happily, there were men great in the law; men who valued the laws of England as much as anybody ever did; and who knew withal that there was something still more sacred than any of these. Oliver said to them, "Go and examine this thing, and in the name of God inform me what is necessary to be done with it. You will see how we may clean-out the foul things in that Chancery Court, which render it poison to everybody." Well, they sat down accordingly, and in the course of six weeks,—(there was no public speaking then, no reporting of speeches, and no babble of any kind, there was just the business in hand),—they got some sixty propositions fixed in their minds as the summary of the things that required to be done. And upon these sixty propositions, Chancery was reconstituted and remodelled; and so it got a new lease of life, and has lasted to our time. It had become a nuisance, and could not have continued much longer. That is an instance of the manner of things that were done when a Dictatorship prevailed in the country, and that was how the Dictator did them. I reckon, all England, Parliamentary England, got a new lease of life from that Dictatorship of Oliver's; and, on the whole, that the good fruits of it will never die while England exists as a nation.

In general, I hardly think that out of common history-books you will ever get into the real history of this country, or ascertain anything which can specially illuminate it for you, and which it would most of all behove you to know. You may read very ingenious and very clever books, by men whom it would be the height of insolence in me to do other than express my respect for. But their position is essentially sceptical. God and the Godlike, as our fathers would have said, has fallen asleep for them; and plays no part in their histories. A most sad and fatal condition of matters; who shall say how fatal to us all! A man unhappily in that condition will make but a temporary explanation of anything:—in short, you will not be able, I believe, by aid of these men, to understand how this Island came to be

what it is. You will not find it recorded in books. You will find recorded in books a jumble of tumults, disastrous ineptitudes, and all that kind of thing. But to get what you want, you will have to look into side sources, and inquire in all directions.

I remember getting Collins's *Peerage* to read,—a very poor performance as a work of genius, but an excellent book for diligence and fidelity. I was writing on Oliver Cromwell at the time. I could get no biographical dictionary available; and I thought the *Peerage Book*, since most of my men were peers or sons of peers, would help me, at least would tell me whether people were old or young, where they lived, and the like particulars, better than absolute nescience and darkness. And accordingly I found amply all I had expected in poor Collins, and got a great deal of help out of him. He was a diligent dull London bookseller, of about a hundred years ago, who compiled out of all kinds of parchments, charter-chests, archives, books that were authentic, and gathered far and wide, wherever he could get it, the information wanted. He was a very meritorious man.

I not only found the solution of everything I had expected there, but I began gradually to perceive this immense fact, which I really advise every one of you who read history to look out for, if you have not already found it. It was that the Kings of England, all the way from the Norman Conquest down to the times of Charles I., had actually, in a good degree, so far as they knew, been in the habit of appointing as Peers those who *deserved* to be appointed. In general, I perceived, those Peers of theirs were all royal men of a sort, with minds full of justice, valour and humanity, and all kinds of qualities that men ought to have who rule over others. And then their genealogy, the kind of sons and descendants they had, this also was remarkable:—for there is a great deal more in genealogy than is generally believed at present. I never heard tell of any clever man that came of entirely stupid people. If you look around, among the families of your acquaintance, you will see such cases in all directions;—I

know that my own experience is steadily that way ; I can trace the father, and the son, and the grandson, and the family stamp is quite distinctly legible upon each of them. So that it goes for a great deal, the hereditary principle,—in Government as in other things ; and it must be again recognised so soon as there is any fixity in things. You will remark, too, in your Collins, that, if at any time the genealogy of a peerage goes awry, if the man that actually holds the peerage is a fool,—in those earnest practical times, the man soon gets into mischief, gets into treason probably,—soon gets himself and his peerage extinguished altogether, in short.

From those old documents of Collins, you learn and ascertain that a peer conducts himself in a pious, high-minded, grave, dignified and manly kind of way, in his course through life, and when he takes leave of life :—his last will is often a remarkable piece, which one lingers over. And then you perceive that there was kindness in him as well as rigour, pity for the poor ; that he has fine hospitalities, generosities,—in fine, that he is throughout much of a noble, good and valiant man. And that in general the King, with a beautiful approximation to accuracy, had nominated this kind of man ; saying, “Come you to me, sir. Come out of the common level of the people, where you are liable to be trampled upon, jostled about, and can do in a manner nothing with your fine gift ; come here and take a district of country, and make it into your own image more or less ; be a king under me, and understand that that is your function.” I say this is the most divine thing that a human being can do to other human beings, and no kind of thing whatever has so much of the character of God Almighty’s Divine Government as that thing, which, we see, went on all over England for about six hundred years. That is the grand soul of England’s history. It is historically true that, down to the time of James, or even Charles I., it was not understood that any man was made a Peer without having merit in him to constitute him a proper subject for a peerage. In Charles I.’s time it grew to be known or said that, if a man was born a gentleman, and

cared to lay-out £10,000 judiciously up and down among courtiers, he could be made a Peer. Under Charles II. it went on still faster, and has been going-on with ever-increasing velocity, until we see the perfectly breakneck pace at which they are going now, so that now a peerage is a paltry kind of thing to what it was in those old times. I could go into a great many more details about things of that sort, but I must turn to another branch of the subject.

First, however, one remark more about your reading. I do not know whether it has been sufficiently brought home to you that there are two kinds of books. When a man is reading on any kind of subject, in most departments of books,—in all books, if you take it in a wide sense,—he will find that there is a division into good books and bad books. Everywhere a good kind of book and a bad kind of book. I am not to assume that you are unacquainted, or ill acquainted, with this plain fact; but I may remind you that it is becoming a very important consideration in our day. And we have to cast aside altogether the idea people have, that if they are reading any book, that if an ignorant man is reading any book, he is doing rather better than nothing at all. I must entirely call that in question; I even venture to deny that. It would be much safer and better for many a reader, that he had no concern with books at all. There is a number, a frightfully increasing number, of books that are decidedly, to the readers of them, not useful. But an ingenuous reader will learn, also, that a certain number of books were written by a supremely noble kind of people,—not a very great number of books, but still a number fit to occupy all your reading industry, do adhere more or less to that side of things. In short, as I have written it down somewhere else, I conceive that books are like men's souls; divided into sheep and goats. Some few are going up, and carrying us up, heavenward; calculated, I mean, to be of priceless advantage in teaching,—in forwarding the teaching of all generations. Others, a frightful multitude, are going down, down; doing ever the more and the wider and the wilder mischief. Keep a strict eye on that latter class of books, my young friends!—

And for the rest, in regard to all your studies and readings here, and to whatever you may learn, you are to remember that the object is not particular knowledges,—not that of getting higher and higher in technical perfections, and all that sort of thing. There is a higher aim lying at the rear of all that, especially among those who are intended for literary or speaking pursuits, or the sacred profession. You are ever to bear in mind that there lies behind that the acquisition of what may be called wisdom;—namely, sound appreciation and just decision as to all the objects that come round you, and the habit of behaving with justice, candour, clear insight, and loyal adherence to fact. Great is wisdom; infinite is the value of wisdom. It cannot be exaggerated; it is the highest achievement of man: “Blessed is he that getteth understanding.” And that, I believe, on occasion, may be missed very easily; never more easily than now, I sometimes think. If that is a failure, all is failure!—However, I will not touch further upon that matter.

But I should have said, in regard to book-reading, if it be so very important, how very useful would an excellent library be in every University! I hope that will not be neglected by the gentlemen who have charge of you; and, indeed, I am happy to hear that your library is very much improved since the time I knew it, and I hope it will go on improving more and more. Nay, I have sometimes thought, why should not there be a library in every county town, for benefit of those that could read well, and might if permitted? True, you require money to accomplish that;—and withal, what perhaps is still less attainable at present, you require judgment in the selectors of books; real insight into what is for the advantage of human souls, the exclusion of all kinds of clap-trap books which merely excite the astonishment of foolish people, and the choice of wise books, as much as possible of good books. Let us hope the future will be kind to us in this respect.

In this University, as I learn from many sides, there is considerable stir about endowments; an assiduous and

praiseworthy industry for getting new funds collected to encourage the ingenuous youth of Universities, especially of this our chief University. Well, I entirely participate in everybody's approval of the movement. It is very desirable. It should be responded to, and one surely expects it will. At least, if it is not, it will be shameful to the country of Scotland, which never was so rich in money as at the present moment, and never stood so much in need of getting noble Universities, and institutions to counteract many influences that are springing up alongside of money. It should not be slack in coming forward in the way of endowments; at any rate, to the extent of rivalling our rude old barbarous ancestors, as we have been pleased to call them. Such munificence as theirs is beyond all praise; and to them, I am sorry to say, we are not yet by any manner of means equal, or approaching equality. There is an abundance and over-abundance of money. Sometimes I cannot help thinking that probably never has there been, at any other time, in Scotland, the hundredth part of the money that now is, or even the thousandth part. For wherever I go, there is that same gold-nuggeting,—that “unexampled prosperity,” and men counting their balances by the million sterling. Money was never so abundant, and nothing that is good to be done with it. No man knows,—or very few men know,—what benefit to get out of his money. In fact, it too often is secretly a curse to him. Much better for him never to have had any. But I do not expect that generally to be believed. Nevertheless, I should think it would be a beneficent relief to many a rich man who has an honest purpose struggling in him, to bequeath some house of refuge, so to speak, for the gifted poor man who may hereafter be born into the world, to enable him to get on his way a little. To do, in fact, as those old Norman kings whom I have been describing; to raise some noble poor man out of the dirt and mud, where he is getting trampled on unworthily by the unworthy, into some kind of position where he might acquire the power to do a little good in his generation! I hope that as much as possible will be achieved in this direction; and that efforts will not

be relaxed till the thing is in a satisfactory state. In regard to the classical department, above all, it surely is to be desired by us that it were properly supported,—that we could allow the fit people to have their scholarships and subventions, and devote more leisure to the cultivation of particular departments. We might have more of this from Scotch Universities than we have; and I hope we shall.

I am bound, however, to say that it does not appear as if, of late times, endowment were the real soul of the matter. The English, for example, are the richest people in the world for endowments in their Universities; and it is an evident fact that, since the time of Bentley, you cannot name anybody that has gained a European name in scholarship, or constituted a point of revolution in the pursuits of men in that way. The man who does so is a man worthy of being remembered; and he is poor, and not an Englishman. One man that actually did constitute a revolution was the son of a poor weaver in Saxony; who edited his Tibullus, in Dresden, in a poor comrade's garret, with the floor for his bed, and two folios for pillow; and who, while editing his Tibullus, had to gather pease-cods on the streets and boil them for his dinner. That was his endowment. But he was recognised soon to have done a great thing. His name was Heyne. I can remember, it was quite a revolution in my mind when I got hold of that man's edition of Virgil. I found that, for the first time, I understood Virgil; that Heyne had introduced me, for the first time, into an insight of Roman life and ways of thought; had pointed out the circumstances in which these works were written, and given me their interpretation. And the process has gone on in all manner of developments, and has spread out into other countries.

On the whole, there is one reason why endowments are not given now as they were in old days, when men founded abbeys, colleges, and all kinds of things of that description, with such success as we know. All that has now changed; a vast decay of zeal in that direction. And truly the reason may in part be, that people have become doubtful whether colleges are now the real sources of what I called



wisdom ; whether they are anything more, anything much more, than a cultivating of man in the specific arts. In fact, there has been in the world a suspicion of that kind for a long time. There goes a proverb of old date, "An ounce of mother-wit is worth a pound of clergy." There is a suspicion that a man is perhaps not nearly so wise as he looks, or because he has poured out speech so copiously. When "the seven free arts," which the old Universities were based on, came to be modified a little, in order to be convenient for the wants of modern society,—though perhaps some of them are obsolete enough even yet for some of us,—there arose a feeling that mere vocality, mere culture of speech, if that is what comes out of a man, is not the synonym of wisdom by any means ! That a man may be a "great speaker," as eloquent as you like, and but little real substance in him,—especially, if that is what was required and aimed at by the man himself, and by the community that set him upon becoming a learned man. Maid-servants, I hear people complaining, are getting instructed in the "ologies," and are apparently becoming more and more ignorant of brewing, boiling, and baking ; and above all, are not taught what is necessary to be known, from the highest of us to the lowest,—faithful obedience, modesty, humility, and correct moral conduct.

Oh, it is a dismal chapter all that, if one went into it,—what has been done by rushing after fine speech ! I have written down some very fierce things about that, perhaps considerably more emphatic than I could now wish them to be ; but they were and are deeply my conviction. There is very great necessity indeed of getting a little more silent than we are. It seems to me as if the finest nations of the world,—the English and the American, in chief,—were going all off into wind and tongue. But it will appear sufficiently tragical by and by, long after I am away out of it. There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent. Silence withal is the eternal duty of a man. He won't get to any real understanding of what is complex, and what is more than aught else pertinent to his interests, without

keeping silence too. "Watch the tongue," is a very old precept, and a most true one.

☞ I don't want to discourage any of you from your Demosthenes, and your studies of the niceties of language, and all that. Believe me, I value that as much as any one of you. I consider it a very graceful thing, and a most proper, for every human creature to know what the implement which he uses in communicating his thoughts is, and how to make the very utmost of it. I want you to study Demosthenes, and to know all his excellences. At the same time, I must say that speech, in the case even of Demosthenes, does not seem, on the whole, to have turned to almost any good account. He advised next to nothing that proved practicable; much of the reverse. Why tell me that a man is a fine speaker, if it is not the truth that he is speaking? Phocion, who mostly did not speak at all, was a great deal nearer hitting the mark than Demosthenes. He used to tell the Athenians, "You can't fight Philip. Better if you don't provoke him, as Demosthenes is always urging you to do. You have not the slightest chance with Philip. He is a man who holds his tongue; he has great disciplined armies; a full treasury; can bribe anybody you like in your cities here; he is going on steadily with an unvarying aim towards his object; while you, with your idle clamourings, with your Cleon the Tanner spouting to you what you take for wisdom—! Philip will infallibly beat any set of men such as you, going on raging from shore to shore with all that rampant nonsense." Demosthenes said to him once, "Phocion, you will drive the Athenians mad some day, and they will kill you." "Yes," Phocion answered, "me, when they go mad; and as soon as they get sane again, you!"

It is also told of him how he went once to Messene, on some deputation which the Athenians wanted him to head, on some kind of matter of an intricate and contentious nature: Phocion went accordingly; and had, as usual, a clear story to have told for himself and his case. He was a man of few words, but all of them true and to the point. And so he had gone on telling his story for a while, when there arose some interruption. One man, interrupting with

something, he tried to answer; then another, the like; till finally, too many went in, and all began arguing and bawling in endless debate. Whereupon Phocion struck-down his staff; drew back altogether, and would speak no other word to any man. It appears to me there is a kind of eloquence in that rap of Phocion's staff which is equal to anything Demosthenes ever said: "Take your own way, then; I go out of it altogether."

Such considerations, and manifold more connected with them,—innumerable considerations, resulting from observation of the world at this epoch,—have led various people to doubt of the salutary effect of vocal education altogether. I do not mean to say it should be entirely excluded; but I look to something that will take hold of the matter much more closely, and not allow it to slip out of our fingers, and remain worse than it was. For, if a "good speaker," never so eloquent, does not see into the fact, and is not speaking the truth of that, but the untruth and the mistake of that,—is there a more horrid kind of object in creation? Of such speech I hear all manner of people say, "How excellent!" Well, really it is not the speech, but the thing spoken, that I am anxious about! I really care very little how the man said it, provided I understand him, and it be true. Excellent speaker? But what if he is telling me things that are contrary to the fact; what if he has formed a wrong judgment about the fact,—if he has in his mind (like Phocion's friend, Cleon the Tanner) no power to form a right judgment in regard to the matter? An excellent speaker of that kind is, as it were, saying, "Ho, every one that wants to be persuaded of the thing that is not true; here is the man for you!" I recommend you to be very chary of that kind of excellent speech.

Well, all that sad stuff being the too well-known product of our method of vocal education,—the teacher merely operating on the tongue of the pupil, and teaching him to wag it in a particular way,—it has made various thinking men entertain a distrust of this not very salutary way of procedure; and they have longed for some less theoretic,

and more practical and concrete way of working-out the problem of education ;—in effect, for an education not vocal at all, but mute except where speaking was strictly needful. There would be room for a great deal of description about this, if I went into it ; but I must content myself with saying that the most remarkable piece of writing on it is in a book of Goethe's,—the whole of which you may be recommended to take up, and try if you can study it with understanding. It is one of his last books ; written when he was an old man above seventy years of age : I think, one of the most beautiful he ever wrote ; full of meek wisdom, of intellect and piety ; which is found to be strangely illuminative, and very touching, by those who have eyes to discern and hearts to feel it. This about education is one of the pieces in *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* ; or rather, in a fitful way, it forms the whole gist of the book. I first read it many years ago ; and, of course, I had to read into the very heart of it while I was translating it ; and it has ever since dwelt in my mind as perhaps the most remarkable bit of writing which I have known to be executed in these late centuries. I have often said that there are some ten pages of that, which, if ambition had been my only rule, I would rather have written, been able to write, than have written all the books that have appeared since I came into the world. Deep, deep is the meaning of what is said there. Those pages turn on the Christian religion, and the religious phenomena of the modern and the ancient world : altogether sketched out in the most ærial, graceful, delicately wise kind of way, so as to keep himself out of the common controversies of the street and of the forum, yet to indicate what was the result of things he had been long meditating upon.

Among others, he introduces in an airy, sketchy kind of way, with here and there a touch,—the sum-total of which grows into a beautiful picture,—a scheme of entirely mute education, at least with no more speech than is absolutely necessary for what the pupils have to do. Three of the wisest men discoverable in the world have been got together, to consider, to manage and supervise, the function

which transcends all others in importance,—that of building up the young generation so as to keep it free from that perilous stuff that has been weighing us down, and clogging every step;—which function, indeed, is the only thing we can hope to go on with, if we would leave the world a little better, and not the worse, of our having been in it, for those who are to follow. The Chief, who is the Eldest of the three, says to Wilhelm: “Healthy well-formed children bring into the world with them many precious gifts; and very frequently these are best of all developed by Nature herself, with but slight assistance, where assistance is seen to be wise and profitable, and with forbearance very often on the part of the overseer of the process. But there is one thing which no child brings into the world with him, and without which all other things are of no use.” Wilhelm, who is there beside him, asks, “And what is that?” “All want it,” says the Eldest; “perhaps you yourself.” Wilhelm says, “Well, but tell me what it is?” “It is,” answers the other, “Reverence (*Ehrfurcht*); Reverence!” Honour done to those who are greater and better than ourselves; honour distinct from fear. *Ehrfurcht*; the soul of all religion that has ever been among men, or ever will be.

And then he goes into details about the religions of the modern and the ancient world. He practically distinguishes the kinds of religion that are, or have been, in the world; and says that for men there are three reverences. The boys are all trained to go through certain gesticulations; to lay their hands on their breast and look up to heaven, in sign of the first reverence; other forms for the other two: so they give their three reverences. The first and simplest is that of reverence for what is above us. It is the soul of all the Pagan religions; there is nothing better in the antique man than that. Then there is reverence for what is around us,—reverence for our equals, to which he attributes an immense power in the culture of man. The third is reverence for what is beneath us; to learn to recognise in pain, in sorrow and contradiction, even in those things, odious to flesh and blood, what divine meanings are in them;

to learn that there lies in these also, and more than in any of the preceding, a priceless blessing. And he defines that as being the soul of the Christian religion,—the highest of all religions; “a height,” as Goethe says (and that is very true, even to the letter, as I consider), “a height to which mankind was fated and enabled to attain; and from which, having once attained it, they can never retrograde.” Man cannot quite lose that (Goethe thinks), or permanently descend below it again; but always, even in the most degraded, sunken and unbelieving times, he calculates there will be found some few souls who will recognise what this highest of the religions meant; and that, the world having once received it, there is no fear of its ever wholly disappearing.

The Eldest then goes on to explain by what methods they seek to educate and train their boys; in the trades, in the arts, in the sciences, in whatever pursuit the boy is found best fitted for. Beyond all, they are anxious to discover the boy's aptitudes; and they try him and watch him continually, in many wise ways, till by degrees they can discover this. Wilhelm had left his own boy there, perhaps expecting they would make him a Master of Arts, or something of the kind; and on coming back for him, he sees a thunder-cloud of dust rushing over the plain, of which he can make nothing. It turns out to be a tempest of wild horses, managed by young lads who had a turn for horsemanship, for hunting, and being grooms. His own son is among them; and he finds that the breaking of colts has been the thing *he* was most suited for.

The highest outcome, and most precious of all the fruits that are to spring from this ideal mode of educating, is what Goethe calls art:—of which I could at present give no definition that would make it clear to you, unless it were clearer already than is likely. Goethe calls it music, painting, poetry: but it is in quite a higher sense than the common one; and a sense in which, I am afraid, most of our painters, poets and music-men would not pass muster. He considers this as the highest pitch to which human culture can go; infinitely valuable and ennobling; and he watches with

great industry how it is to be brought about in the men who have a turn for it. Very wise and beautiful his notion of the matter is. It gives one an idea that something far better and higher, something as high as ever, and indubitably true too, is still possible for man in this world.—And that is all I can say to you of Goethe's fine theorem of mute education.

I confess it seems to me there is in it a shadow of what will one day be; will and must, unless the world is to come to a conclusion that is altogether frightful: some kind of scheme of education analogous to that; presided over by the wisest and most sacred men that can be got in the world, and watching from a distance: a training in practicality at every turn; no speech in it except speech that is to be followed by action, for that ought to be the rule as nearly as possible among men. Not very often or much, rarely rather, should a man speak at all, unless it is for the sake of something that is to be done; this spoken, let him go and do his part in it, and say no more about it.

I will only add, that it is possible,—all this fine theorem of Goethe's, or something similar! Consider what we have already; and what "difficulties" we have overcome. I should say there is nothing in the world you can conceive so difficult, *prima facie*, as that of getting a set of men gathered together as soldiers. Rough, rude, ignorant, disobedient people; you gather them together, promise them a shilling a day; rank them up, give them very severe and sharp drill; and by bullying and drilling and compelling (the word *drilling*, if you go to the original, means "beating," "steadily tormenting" to the due pitch), they do learn what it is necessary to learn; and there is your man in red coat, a trained soldier; piece of an animated machine incomparably the most potent in this world; a wonder of wonders to look at. He will go where bidden; obeys one man, will walk into the cannon's mouth for him; does punctually whatever is commanded by his general officer. And, I believe, all manner of things of this kind could be accomplished, if there were the same attention bestowed. Very many things could be regimented, organised into this

mute system;—and perhaps in some of the mechanical, commercial and manufacturing departments some faint incipiences may be attempted before very long. For the saving of human labour, and the avoidance of human misery, the effects would be incalculable, were it set about and begun even in part.

Alas, it is painful to think how very far away it all is, any real fulfilment of such things! For I need not hide from you, young Gentlemen,—and it is one of the last things I am going to tell you,—that you have got into a very troublous epoch of the world; and I don't think you will find your path in it to be smoother than ours has been, though you have many advantages which we had not. You have careers open to you, by public examinations and so on, which is a thing much to be approved of, and which we hope to see perfected more and more. All that was entirely unknown in my time, and you have many things to recognise as advantages. But you will find the ways of the world, I think, more anarchical than ever. Look where one will, revolution has come upon us. We have got into the age of revolutions. All kinds of things are coming to be subjected to fire, as it were: hotter and hotter blows the element round everything. Curious to see how, in Oxford and other places that used to seem as lying at anchor in the stream of time, regardless of all changes, they are getting into the highest humour of mutation, and all sorts of new ideas are afloat. It is evident that whatever is not inconsumable, made of *asbestos*, will have to be burnt, in this world. Nothing other will stand the heat it is getting exposed to.

And in saying that, I am but saying in other words that we are in an epoch of anarchy. Anarchy *plus* a constable! There is nobody that picks one's pocket without some policeman being ready to take him up. But in every other point, man is becoming more and more the son, not of Cosmos, but of Chaos. He is a disobedient, discontented, reckless and altogether waste kind of object (the commonplace man is, in these epochs); and the wiser kind of man,—the select few, of whom I hope you will be part,—has



more and more to see to this, to look vigilantly forward ; and will require to move with double wisdom. Will find, in short, that the crooked things he has got to pull straight in his own life all round him, wherever he may go, are manifold, and will task all his strength, however great it be.

But why should I complain of that either ? For that is the thing a man is born to, in all epochs. He is born to expend every particle of strength that God Almighty has given him, in doing the work he finds he is fit for ; to stand up to it to the last breath of life, and do his best. We are called upon to do that ; and the reward we all get, —which we are perfectly sure of, if we have merited it,—is that we have got the work done, or at least that we have tried to do the work. For that is a great blessing in itself ; and I should say, there is not very much more reward than that going in this world. If the man gets meat and clothes, what matters it whether he buy those necessities with seven thousand a year, or with seven million, could that be, or with seventy pounds a year ? He can get meat and clothes for that ; and he will find intrinsically, if he is a wise man, wonderfully little real difference.

On the whole, avoid what is called ambition ; that is not a fine principle to go upon,—and it has in it all degrees of *vulgarity*, if that is a consideration. “Seekest thou great things, seek them not” : I warmly second that advice of the wisest of men. Don’t be ambitious ; don’t too much need success ; be loyal and modest. Cut down the proud towering thoughts that get into you, or see that they be pure as well as high. There is a nobler ambition than the gaining of all California would be, or the getting of all the suffrages that are on the Planet just now.

Finally, Gentlemen, I have one advice to give you, which is practically of very great importance, though a very humble one. In the midst of your zeal and ardour,—for such, I foresee, will rise high enough, in spite of all the counsels to moderate it that I can give you,—remember the care of health. I have no doubt you have among you

young souls ardently bent to consider life cheap, for the purpose of getting forward in what they are aiming at of high ; but you are to consider throughout, much more than is done at present, and what it would have been a very great thing for me if I had been able to consider, that health is a thing to be attended to continually ; that you are to regard that as the very highest of all temporal things for you. There is no kind of achievement you could make in the world that is equal to perfect health. What to it are nuggets and millions ? The French financier said, " Why, is there no sleep to be sold ! " Sleep was not in the market at any quotation.

It is a curious thing, which I remarked long ago, and have often turned in my head, that the old word for " holy " in the Teutonic languages, *heilig*, also means " healthy." Thus *Heilbronn* means indifferently " holy-well " or " health-well." We have in the Scotch, too, " hale," and its derivatives ; and, I suppose, our English word " whole " (with a " w "), all of one piece, without any *hole* in it, is the same word. I find that you could not get any better definition of what " holy " really is than " healthy." Completely healthy ; *mens sana in corpore sano*. A man all lucid, and in equilibrium. His intellect a clear mirror geometrically plane, brilliantly sensitive to all objects and impressions made on it, and imaging all things in their correct proportions ; not twisted up into convex or concave, and distorting everything, so that he cannot see the truth of the matter without endless groping and manipulation : healthy, clear and free, and discerning truly all round him. We never can attain that at all. In fact, the operations we have got into are destructive of it. You cannot, if you are going to do any decisive intellectual operation that will last a long while ; if, for instance, you are going to write a book,—you cannot manage it (at least, I never could) without getting decidedly made ill by it : and really one nevertheless must ; if it is your business, you are obliged to follow out what you are at, and to do it, if even at the expense of health. Only remember, at all times, to get back as fast as possible out of it into health ; and regard that as the real equilibrium and centre of things.

You should always look at the *heilig*, which means "holy" as well as "healthy."

And that old etymology,—what a lesson it is against certain gloomy, austere, ascetic people, who have gone about as if this world were all a dismal prison-house! It has indeed got all the ugly things in it which I have been alluding to; but there is an eternal sky over it; and the blessed sunshine, the green of prophetic spring, and rich *harvests* coming,—all this is in it too. Piety does not mean that a man should make a sour face about things, and refuse to enjoy wisely what his Maker has given. Neither do you find it to have been so with the best sort,—with old Knox, in particular. No; if you look into Knox, you will find a beautiful Scotch humour in him, as well as the grimmest and sternest truth when necessary, and a great deal of laughter. We find really some of the sunniest glimpses of things come out of Knox that I have seen in any man; for instance, in his *History of the Reformation*,—which is a book I hope every one of you will read, a glorious old book.

On the whole, I would bid you stand up to your work, whatever it may be, and not be afraid of it; not in sorrows or contradictions to yield, but to push on towards the goal. And don't suppose that people are hostile to you or have you at ill-will, in the world. In general, you will rarely find anybody designedly doing you ill. You may feel often as if the whole world were obstructing you, setting itself against you: but you will find that to mean only, that the world is travelling in a different way from you, and, rushing on its own path, heedlessly treads on you. That is mostly all: to you no specific ill-will;—only each has an extremely good-will to himself, which he has a right to have, and is rushing on towards his object. Keep out of literature, I should say also, as a general rule,—though that is by the bye. If you find many people who are hard and indifferent to you, in a world which you consider to be inhospitable and cruel, as often indeed happens to a tender-hearted, striving young creature, you will also find there are noble hearts who will look kindly on you; and their help will be precious

to you beyond price. You will get good and evil as you go on, and have the success that has been appointed you.

I will wind-up with a small bit of verse, which is from Goethe also, and has often gone through my mind. To me it has something of a modern psalm in it, in some measure. It is deep as the foundations, deep and high, and it is true and clear :—no clearer man, or nobler or grander intellect has lived in the world, I believe, since Shakspeare left it. This is what the poet sings :—a kind of road-melody or marching music of mankind :

The Future hides in it  
Gladness and sorrow ;  
We press still thorow,  
Nought that abides in it  
Daunting us,—onward.

And solemn before us,  
Veiled, the dark Portal ;  
Goal of all mortal :—  
Stars silent rest o'er us,  
Graves under us silent !

While earnest thou gazest,  
Comes boding of terror,  
Comes phantasm and error ;  
Perplexes the bravest  
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the Voices,  
Heard are the Sages,  
The Worlds and the Ages :  
"Choose well ; your choice is  
Brief, and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you,  
In Eternity's stillness ;  
Here is all fulness,  
Ye brave, to reward you ;  
Work, and despair not."

Work and despair not: *Wir heissen euch hoffen*, "We bid you be of hope!"—let that be my last word. Gentlemen, I thank you for your great patience in hearing me ; and, with many most kind wishes, say Adieu for this time.



Moncreiff (1. baron).

ADDRESS

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JAMES MONCREIFF

LL.D., M.P.

(afterwards 1st BARON MONCREIFF of Tulliebole)

LORD RECTOR

JAN. 18, 1869



**GENTLEMEN**—Chosen by your free suffrages to the honourable position in which you have now placed me, I can hardly find words sufficient to express the gratification with which I have received that honour. It is a great distinction in itself, greater still when I consider who those are who have gone before me. I am now the third Lord Rector who has occupied this place by your suffrages. I fairly admit that, weighed in the scales of public celebrity, I should be found greatly wanting. I have no pretensions to rank in a category either along with or second to such names as Gladstone or Carlyle. As to the first I need not use language of eulogy, for the position he occupies as the ruler of this country is his best panegyric, even if our relations rendered such a strain appropriate from me.<sup>1</sup> Of Mr. Carlyle's genius, however, nothing forbids me to speak in the terms of reverent and affectionate admiration with which all his countrymen regard him. It has been his singular good fortune, during a literary life largely engaged in sharp criticism, to reap from the thorns of controversy nothing but the fruits of kindness, deference, and goodwill from all. We have never forgotten, and to his credit be it spoken, amid all the incense and flatteries of a wider sphere, he has never forgotten that he is one of ourselves. He is not a Scotsman of that obnoxious type which our country sometimes sends across the border, men who seem to think it raises their position to sneer at the country, the habits, and the associations of their youth. Carlyle's fund of genuine, hearty scorn is very deep, and in no direction would it be more readily or more worthily bestowed than on those degenerate

<sup>1</sup> Lord Moncreiff was at the time of his appointment Lord Advocate in Mr. Gladstone's Ministry.



sons of the North who crop up every now and then in society and in the press, who consider it a feather in their cap to disparage the land which had the misfortune to lose them. If Carlyle had no other claim on the sympathy of Scotland, he would be honoured and loved for having preserved, amid the smiles of the great and the applause of Europe, the Doric simplicity of his speech, and the Scottish manliness of his heart. The words of weighty wisdom which he delivered from this chair, and the true-hearted and kindly sentences in which he took his leave of you, may well be cherished by those to whom they were addressed, as the utterances of one of the oracles of the earth, dim, it may be, sometimes, and obscure, as oracles are wont, its responses given forth immaturely, in too early an epoch in the minds of his countrymen,—sometimes warped also, and twisted by intensity of thought out of their just relations,—but always deep, vigorous, and full of significancy, penetrating the very foundations of human action and society. No more worthy name will ever be inscribed on your roll of Lord Rectors than that of Thomas Carlyle.

And now it is my duty, in accordance with precedent, to address you on the occasion of my installation. In doing so, I need not try to rub up my disused and rusty classics in the vain hope that they may show alongside of the genuine metal of Mr. Gladstone. I need not affect a shallow philosophy to match the deep and profound meditations of Carlyle. Any power I have lies in another and a less ambitious sphere. A few practical suggestions, inducing, it may be, a train of reflection not unimproving, and such general views of University life, teaching, and study as my experience may have enabled me to furnish, constitute all I have to offer—at least, all which I mean to attempt. If I add to this a very sincere and honest sympathy with student life, and hearty desire for your progress and welfare, I have summed up all you have to expect from me to-day.

It is indeed a singular, and will ever be a cherished honour which you have done me, in electing me to fill this office in a line of succession so distinguished. I can reflect little of it back. The rays of genius and learning, of fame

and renown, with which my predecessors illuminated the position to which you raised them, cannot be looked for from me. I must vindicate your choice on a lower level, and in a humbler sphere. Yet I shall not disparage your selection by undue self-depreciation. I had some qualities to recommend me to your favour which former Lord Rectors did not possess—qualities to which, doubtless, I owe this mark of confidence at your hands. I was not, like Mr. Gladstone, reared and fostered in the bosom of an English University. I was not, like Mr. Carlyle, early transplanted to a southern climate, and removed from the practical experience of the desires and requirements of our Scottish seats of learning. Born as I was beside her precincts, nurtured and trained within her walls, in youth and in manhood familiar with her daily life, my claims on your academic constituency consist only in this, that all I have ever learned, or gained, or striven for, or accomplished, has been the fruit of my experience as an alumnus of your University. During a life spent in active and laborious pursuits, it has been my good fortune to have been conversant with some great events, and to come into contact with many men of varied ability and in many conditions of life. The long-continued labours of an exacting profession have bestowed on me some facility in the transaction of affairs; and it is only paying the due tribute which I owe, that I should devote them, as you have enabled me to do, as a slender recompense, to the service of the University, in the spirit of an affectionate and grateful son.

Nor is it, I assure you, without a strong tinge of sentiment that I return as its Lord Rector to the institution which, thirty-five years ago, I left for the realities and the struggles of the world. Looking at the audience before me, with all the nascent, half-formed aspirations, hopes, and forecastings which are the attributes of student life, the interval, which must sound long enough to your ears, seems to me to vanish like mist on the mountain, and I feel as if I were transported back through the long vista I have travelled over, to those sunny though chequered years which I spent within her walls.

College days are a miniature of life itself, exhibiting in its course many of the phases which we meet with in this varying terrestrial scene. Bounding and fresh is the spirit when it first starts on student life. Free from the trammels, the subjugation, not to say the pains and penalties, of school, the first sense of recognised manhood giving a firmer carriage to the step and a nobler aspect to the brow, the pleased but wondering consciousness of liberty, of power, and of responsibility, filling the young heart now with exultation and then with a tinge of solemnity, the newly-fledged student presents himself for matriculation, with a trembling pride, but with thoughts of golden colour, and hopes and aspirations all bright with the sunshine of the soul. The first dawn of independent thought sends a flutter through the heart. Hitherto life has been obedience—it may be disobedience; now it is free will, free action, free working, and free idleness also. The lad—nay, I should say the man—for all are men at College—is for the first time called on to think, and choose, and decide for himself. He is to study, not merely to learn, and to assume, from the hands which have hitherto guided him, the reins of his own conduct. His must be a poor spirit and a cold heart whose pulse did not beat high with pure and elevating emotion at this first step from dependence to freedom—from thoughtfulness to real and earnest life. Whether born of high ancestry, or of lowly origin—whether blessed by the ease which competency bestows, or entering on that battle with fortune which so many have to fight—all yield to the spell, and bask in its cheering and exhilarating beams. Care sits lightly on the youthful brow, and the student's gaiety costs little. Happy he who, when college life's "poor play is o'er," can leave the walls he entered with so much of the innocent dignity of dawning manhood, with an unrepublishing conscience, and an unsullied heart.

But the youth of college life soon gives place to its manhood. Then come the miniature cares and struggles—the ambitions, the successes, the disappointments, which on a larger and harder scale are to be the lot in the experience of the world, until old age at last succeeds, and the Nestors

of the College yard enter the class-rooms they are soon to leave with a subdued and patronising pomp, sustained in their own minds by consciousness of superior dignity, even if their younger and more volatile fellow-students are less observant of it, and less reverent to it than their years demand. There is nothing one can meet with in life which appears so grave, so experienced, so self-convinced, so thoroughly

The wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best,

as one sometimes meets with in a man fresh from College. Time and vexatious experience, it is true, make him younger every day; but there is something attractive to me in his honest dogmatism. His confidence in himself has been fairly earned in honourable conflict with his fellows. His opinions, although they seem and are preternaturally mature, have been sublimated in the pure crucible of truth, unalloyed by the baser elements of self-interest, or of party, sectarian, or sordid influences. And, truth to say, nature does not always assert herself thus without reason. All is not progress as the heart and the intellect grow older. Well may the student cherish those years which are devoted to acquirement, for there is, while they last, a clearer insight—a purer and more penetrating sense of the just, the beautiful, and the true, than well can be theirs again. It is the instinct of youth, before contact with the world has blunted its finer sensibility, and before the disturbing forces of worldly cares have given obscurity to its utterances. A man may really be wiser at twenty than at forty, although, perhaps, it is not absolutely necessary that he should look as if he thought so.

These are the reflections which crowd upon me now, as, casting my eye back upon the past, I recall my college days. They were very pleasant days to me; “fresh fields, and pastures new”—new faces, new friends, and the first germinating of the seeds of earnest ambition, it is agreeable even at this long interval to remember. Of course, some bitter mingles with retrospect, as it always does. The kind domestic faces which lighted up at any of our boyish

victories, and whose approbation and applause were the main reward of toil, and some, too, of the cherished companions who started along with us on the race of life, we may never see again. Then come the ghosts of departed opportunities—those unwelcome and reproachful visitors which haunt our footsteps along life's shadowy track, and make their upbraiding heard in the very crises of disappointment and defeat—"that juggling fiend," as we are apt unjustly to call it,

which never spoke before,  
But cries, "I warned you," when the deed is o'er,

dogs our path to the end. It is a lesson never learned to its full profit until taught by unavailing experience. Nevertheless, from this chair I can preach no more appropriate lesson—can sound no note of more timely or more salutary warning in your case than *Carpe diem*—use the too fleeting moments—and let not listlessness, procrastination, or distraction divert you from that mine of wealth, your spoils from which will well repay you with accumulated interest for every hour you spend in honest labour.

Still, the retrospect is pleasant. I look back with increasing admiration and reverence to the University system as I knew it; and, as it now exists, brought back by recent legislation to more nearly its ancient model, I think it worthy of all approbation.

Time, indeed, has changed, outwardly and inwardly, very much since I entered the University in 1825. The pace of the world has been greatly quickened since then. They were days unconscious of railways, and when the very name of a telegram was unknown. But probably student life has changed less than other aspects of our social condition, and the old associations which I carried away in 1832 will probably find in this year 1869 sympathy and counterparts among yourselves.

My seven years at College, however, were remarkable years in the history of this country and of the world. They embraced the greatest transition of thought, habits, and feelings which this century has experienced. I wit-

nessed in the course of them the extinction of the old and the dawn of the new school of opinion. I saw the beginning of that war of principles which, apart altogether from politics, has resulted in so many triumphs to society, philosophy, and intellectual advancement. Possibly the distinctive features of college experience in 1825, and the associations they have left behind, may have some interest to those over whom I have been elected to preside.

They were very sleepy days, in November 1825. Every one was asleep; literature, politics, society, were all fast asleep. The Bourbons slumbered peacefully in France, and the Holy Alliance in Europe, as if their repose was to last for ever. The literary genius of the commencement of the century had passed its zenith, and its heroes were peacefully resting on their laurels. Sometimes a note would be sounded from Byron or the author of *Waverley*; but the days of *Childe Harold* and *Ivanhoe* were over. Nothing prefigured the future, while little remained of the past. Wordsworth wrote nothing; Coleridge nothing; Campbell nothing; the *Edinburgh Review* had nothing to criticise, and had subsided into a state of chronic torpor.

Politics also were intensely soporific. The Tories were in, and the Whigs were out. The Tories had been in, and the Whigs had been out, for forty years. It seemed the necessary and natural course of events that things should so continue for forty years to come. Reform in Parliament, it is true, like the fiddle in the *Rejected Addresses*—

Gave, half ashamed, a tiny flourish still,

once in two or three years, but it was dreamily discarded, as matter of course, into the limbo of oblivion, and Politics folded her hands again, and went to sleep.

Divinity slumbered. The Moderates reigned in the General Assembly, and repressed, by calm but overwhelming majorities, the more wakeful of the brethren. A field-day on Church Patronage once a year brought out superfluous debating power which had no other opportunity for its exercise; but every one knew beforehand what was going to

happen. After the sudden, brilliant, but spasmodic effort, the waters were again to subside, until a similar motion next year broke "the repose of the wave."

The lethargy affected the schools of Mental Philosophy. The Scottish system of metaphysics had reached its culmination, and had no farther to go. Raised to reputation, and probably to its highest perfection by Reid, Hume, and Smith, promulgated with unrivalled eloquence by Dugald Stewart, and transmuted by Thomas Brown into a compound half rhetorical, half transcendental, it had come to a long protracted pause. Some streaks in the East denoted the dawn of a new school of thinkers imbued with the lucubrations of Germany; but Sir William Hamilton had not yet commenced those labours which made him so famous, and these indications were but faintly discerned through the fogs of November 1825.

As might have been expected, the general quiescence and lassitude extended to the college yards. There was a density in the atmosphere, a haze pervading her class-rooms, which mediocrity did not try, and genius was not altogether able, to dissipate. The very sunshine in the quadrangle was sleepy; and a quiet, decorous, academic drowsiness seemed to preside over all things.

Men in those days little dreamed of the change which was impending. Before I left the University it had burst over Europe, and had not only infused new life, vigour, and independence into human thought, but had swept away, in the strength of its current, many cherished and ancient dogmas, never more to show their heads above the waters. The short but stirring Government of Mr. Canning in 1827, and the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829, were the first political impulses which brushed the surface; but the French Revolution in 1830 thoroughly woke up Europe, with all her politics, divinity, and philosophy, from her slumbers. She has never gone to sleep again, and the stimulating effect of the succeeding years of political change and contention in this country acted on the University like the spell in the Eastern fable. The sleepers started to their feet; the drowsy hum was changed to sharp challenge and

disputation; received axioms were questioned; ancient doubts were revived; and, when I left College in 1832, the war of principles and words was raging more fiercely than ever, and the new dominion was laying, in energy, impetuosity, and power, the firm foundations of its sway.

I speak not of Politics, but of History. Those of us who can look back to those times can afford so to deal with them, and to remember the keen contests of our College days with the feelings of philosophy as well as of friendship. The commonplace and favourite illustration of academic retrospect has generally been congenial tastes, views, and opinions in harmony—

Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were thine.

But contention has its charms too, and it has more spirit, at least, than concurrence. From the field of strife you may reap the fruits of friendship; and of the many friends I made in those early, and still retain in these later years, many of the most valued and most stable were those with whom I lived in a state of chronic warfare, and whom I gained in many a bitter campaign on Catholic disabilities or Reform in Parliament.

But Politics—I think I hear a warning voice say—some grave academic Apollo touching my trembling ear—Politics to students! the theme is forbidden, it is against all rules, all discipline, all propriety. But is it so? Politics, in the larger sense, govern the world, and govern all its wisdom, its philosophy, its learning, its studies. The whole tenor and complexion of human thought are tinged, if not determined, by the vicissitudes of condition under which large communities live, which we mean by the term Politics. The Reformation, the Rebellion, the Revolution, the '15 and the '45, have left their indelible marks on history, and the intellectual progress of the period of which history tells. It is but a pedantic view of public events which would have the student conversant with the history of the past and ignorant of that of the present. We spend years in learning the politics of Greece and Rome, the plots of Philip or of Catiline—the intrigues of Octavius and Mark Antony,—



why should the student know nothing of the politics in progress around him ?

Let Euclid and let Archimedes rest,  
And what the Swede intends, and what the French.

Milton ranks them both as congenial objects of study, and in such times as those I speak of it could not have been otherwise. Those who recollect the crowds that used to await the arrival of the mail in 1831 and 1832, with the news of the varying fortunes of the Reform Bill, as the scale of Grey or of Peel sank in the balance, the intense agitation of the public mind, the open-air meetings, the hot discussions—not excluded, I suspect, from the august halls of the Senatus itself—may easily understand that abstinence from politics was a doctrine which, when addressed to students of that day, was preached in vain.

Possibly, when I have had more experience in the duties of the chair to which you have elevated me, I also may acquire that decorous austerity which will shrink and collapse at the sound of politics. But I am too new to authority, and too mindful of the past, to assume all at once the true cathedral tone.

Nor do I regret now, although at the time I did so, that I had not the opportunity of some experience at one of the English Universities. After all, to the student especially, “the mind is its own place.” Opportunities of acquirement are all which seats of learning can furnish. The spring and incentive must be found within ; and often, in the course of learning, as in many other things, progress and attainment are in the inverse ratio even of opportunity. *Nitor in adversum* is usually the motto of excellence in any intellectual department. That which is dearly bought is dearly prized ; while, if the treasure be laid down at our door, sometimes we hardly stoop to take it up. Many a tale can our Scotch Universities tell of fierce protracted battles with poverty and hardship, endured, fought, and won in the cause of learning. Those to whom the path has been made easy, stripped of all its rugged obstructions, strewn with flowers, and commanding many pleasant points and prospects, little

know how hard, how grinding, how distracting, even despairing, the journey to the less favoured sometimes is; not merely because chill penury may repress the noble rage, but from the absence of facilities which aid, and the pressure of many of the inconveniences and annoyances which obstruct, the pursuit of knowledge. Seclusion, physical comfort, quiet, silence, light, and air are about as essential, or at least as conducive, to study, as professors and books. A hurdy-gurdy under the window, or a hand-organ half-way down the street, grinding out its never-ending strain, may undo the sagest lucubrations, and arrest genius in the very moment of projection. A dark lodging, which hardly lets in the dim December sun, noisy neighbours with squalling children, scanty appliances for study or reference, hours broken up by the necessity of obtaining a livelihood in the daily struggle with the world, the absence of all that is bright, or sunny, or exhilarating to cheer the jaded and desponding spirit, and gild the dull monotony of unceasing toil—these, and many such, are the impediments which Scottish students often encounter, but which many a Scottish student has overcome. One can easily see that the exertion of will and constancy necessary to conquer or to disregard these surrounding drawbacks must stamp in the mind, with a firmer impress, the knowledge so painfully gained. To run such a race under such weights requires a course of training, and the very discipline itself adds manliness to the character, and vigour to the intellect.

It is in this distinctive feature that I think the excellence of our Scottish University system mainly is to be found. It is a system intended to be, and which to a large extent is, national, and not exclusive—not intended for any caste or class, but formed on a plan which contemplates the instruction of all classes, and which is carried on at a cost which practically comprehends all who can afford to spare the necessary time from daily labour. Nor is there anything distinctive or peculiar in these characteristics. I rather suppose that we have borrowed our University arrangements from the Continent, and founded them on the model of the more famous schools of learning.

There is a passage in the work of Bulæus concerning the University of Paris, which not only illustrates the wandering habits of the learned of our countrymen at a very early period, but indicates that we have some claim to old University experience. He tells how, in the reign of Charlemagne, two Scots appeared in a town in France, who, standing in the market-place and having nothing to sell, called out to the passers-by, "Whoever wishes to buy wisdom, let him come to us, for we have it to sell." On hearing of this, the Emperor sent for these vendors of wisdom, and asked them what their terms were. They answered, "A convenient place to teach in,—ingenuous youth to teach,—and that without which our pilgrimage is fruitless, food and raiment for ourselves." The Emperor thought the terms reasonable; and these two men laid the foundation of the University system in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

It has been suggested that these learned persons were not Scotsmen, but Irishmen. It is said that "Scotus" meant, in those days, an Irishman. It is said in the text that these "Scoti" came "ex Hibernia," which is true. But, in another part of the same work, one of these persons is spoken of as "Joannes cognomenti Mailrosius, etiam natione Scotus, sic dictus ab oppido Mailrosio,"—and Melrose, I take it, is in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

But whatever may be the claims of Scotland to this distinction, it is certain that we formed our seats of learning, as we did most of our institutions, on European models.

Such Universities or Colleges as Oxford and Cambridge, in which professors' or collective teaching are only subsidiary to a network of private tuition, are, I believe, entirely peculiar to England. The public prelections on which our system of University teaching depends are similar to those which prevail in the Continental Universities; and the more I have attended to this important subject, the less inclined I am to attempt to remodel these institutions on any English example.

It has been doubted—it is a fair subject for doubt—whether the entire absence of domestic discipline within

<sup>1</sup> Bulæus, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 610.

the Scottish Universities be an advantage or the reverse. But here too—although at one time I was inclined to a different opinion—I am disposed to give the preference to the prevalent system of Scotland, on the simple ground that it is natural, and not monastic. There is a touch of nature, of freedom, of humanity, even in the bare garret, up three stories, scantily furnished with comfort, slenderly lighted and heated, which I have figured to myself. Still it is home. It is free of the fetters. The man's mind expands within it, as he feels himself at liberty, a responsible agent, not condemned to inhabit an artificial atmosphere, and to live surrounded by restraints as arbitrary as they are too often ineffectual. That will be found to be one great difference between the systems, and it goes very deep indeed both into the actual progress of the student and into the formation of national character. The touch of monasticism, if it cannot be called asceticism, which pervades the discipline of the English Colleges, forms the students for the time into a class apart, and has a tendency to give a narrow and distinctive tone of thought, feeling, and even manner, to those who are subjected to it. I prefer what I think the healthier system of day scholars. I am not insensible of the corresponding evils; but such has been the atmosphere under which the sons of Scotland have risen to greatness.

In the constitution of natural society, as opposed to the artificial, there are elements for good—beneficent agents, which insensibly affect the intellect and the conscience, not through affection only, but through habit. The tendency of isolation weakens these influences exactly in proportion to its extent and completeness. Deference to age, respect for manhood, reverence for childhood, consideration for the gentler sex, can only be learned in the ordinary current of daily life. Yet are these the true humanisers of man. They dilute and obliterate that tincture of ferocity which, fenced round and chained by the trammels of civilisation and society, still lurks in the masculine heart. The merit of our Scottish system is that it admits at least of the operation of these influences. But probably a modification of both would be desirable. University discipline in

England might easily be less monastic, and yet more effective; while University authorities in Scotland might, without infringing on their extramural liberty, have more control than they have over their ordinary pursuits.

Nor must I omit, in this short summary of our Scottish University system, to name one, not the least bright, of the jewels in her crown. They are—they have always been—Universities for the nation. We are called a bigoted people. The complacent Saxon compares us with Spain, and calls on the world to mark how alike Catholic and Protestant religionists are. Judge us by that crucial test of bigotry—education. Before they speak of Scotch intolerance, let our neighbours in the south throw open the gates and the rewards of knowledge, as we have done, to all comers, without distinction of race, or creed, or opinion. Let us find the children of Churchman and Dissenter, Catholic and Protestant, sitting on the same bench, striving in honest and equal rivalry to outstrip one another in the honourable race of learning. My friend Mr. Bruce, the Home Secretary, did us the justice the other day to allude to the fact that we needed no conscience clause in Scotland, because for two hundred years conscience had been respected in Scottish schools without any legislation for its protection. He expressed a gentle wonder that this should be so in a country rather famed for its intolerance. I should answer that the truth is our nation is tenacious—it is not intolerant. In no country in Europe with the history of which I am acquainted has more respect been shown to difference of creed—in none more earnest desire exhibited to accomplish the real work of educating the nation. You may easily, if the task be congenial, discover flagrant, nay disgraceful instances to the contrary. But for one you will find among the Presbyterians of the North, I will point out twenty in number, of twenty times the atrocity, in the South. When we suggest the fact that religious persecution only ceased in Scotland when the Presbyterian element ruled, we are told that this was on compulsion, and not on principle. But at least our schools and our universities have been under our own control; and when we find in them the principle of reli-

gious liberty enshrined—not worshipped as an empty name, while it is practically derided and denied, but cultivated and honoured in one of the most sacred of human duties, the training of the young—this jargon about intolerance may well cease until those who use it have followed our example.

If I may be allowed one more word personal to myself, it has been the most gratifying event to me in my public life that I was partly instrumental in placing the cope-stone on this fabric of national toleration, and in rending away the last defacing tatters of those exclusive tests which hung around it. Tests for the scholars we never had either in school or college, and therein we set an example to our critics; but tests for masters and professors till very recently remained, to the great scandal of religion, and the manifest injury of the public. If any act of my public life has entitled me to the honour you have conferred upon me, it is the part I have borne in removing these useless and pernicious encumbrances, and leaving the chair of the professor and the desk of the master open to the ablest men in the department.

There is one distinctive feature in the Scottish University system which perhaps attracts in these days less attention than it deserves. Its curriculum is complete; it is a training-school for professional life in all its varied branches. Its object is not so much to send out accomplished scholars as to educate men for the practical business of life. It aims not at excellence in one, but the mastery of all the branches of knowledge in which future usefulness and success depend. Alongside our schools of classical learning are our Chairs of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, which may carry, and have carried, physical science as high as modern knowledge has yet attained to. Mental Philosophy, once the glory and still the congenial study of the Scottish scholar, holds an equal place with classical and scientific eminence. The Chairs of Chemistry, Natural History, and Botany not only form an avenue to the great Medical School, but hold out to the general student facilities of proficiency in these great and interesting departments of knowledge. Logic and Rhetoric stand in a similar relationship to the Faculties of

Divinity and Law ; while the proper professional Chairs in the three learned Faculties complete the academic circle, and are intended to send out the student armed at all points for the discharge of the duties of active life.

Theoretically, the system is complete, and, if its advantages are duly cultivated, affords the student the means of attaining a competent amount of proficiency in all. None has an undue preponderance over another. It is not calculated to send forth its students bristling with Greek particles and inflections, masters of the most intricate mathematical processes, and yet as ignorant of physical and natural science in their actual development, and as unconscious of the literature of their own country, as when they first entered the College gates. There is an equipoise in its course of study which contrasts favourably with the sister Universities in England, each of which cultivates to the highest perfection one department in the Faculty of Arts, to the comparative neglect of many, and the entire neglect of some of the others.<sup>1</sup>

It is by this peculiarity, I rather imagine, that my friend Mr. Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was led to that fierce and startling denunciation of classical learning which he delivered a short time ago in this city. He had probably before his mind's eye some successful scholar emerging from the classic shades of Oxford—that beautiful and most academic shrine of learning, the very aspect of which speaks of refinement, elegance, consummate scholarship, and learned leisure, and to which one is tempted to forgive much of her narrow haughtiness and mediæval pride, for the charm and the perfection of the setting in which they are displayed. He probably looked back on the career of an Eton boy and Oxford undergraduate even in its most favourable aspect, and when the schools were over, and the double-first attained, and all the College honours thick upon his head, turned to consider, not how much he knew, but of how much knowledge

<sup>1</sup> I explained in the course of this address that I by no means meant to depreciate the scholarship of England. It is accurate to an extent to which we have no pretensions ; and their rich foundations give opportunities of study which rarely occur with us.

he had probably never even heard. In that, the most favourable specimen of the system, how imperfectly armed did the champion go forth for the battles of the world. But as double-firsts are few, it fares of course still worse with the limited number that find their way to honours, and worst of all with that large proportion of her sons that never attains to honours at all. "Here," he would say, "are the very *élite* of the youth of England—those by whom her fortunes are in the next generation to be swayed, spending those ten years which education claims in a fruitless chase in which not one in a hundred has a chance of overtaking the prey, and in which the prey, when captured, is of no service to its successful pursuer."

"*Experto crede*," my distinguished friend would say—"No one knows it better than I do"; and in that he speaks truly. He is certainly not the great original he draws. He is one of the ablest and most finished scholars of his day, and no one exhibits, in his great Parliamentary efforts, more thoroughly the depth and variety of his classical knowledge. Unconsciously perhaps to himself, there is scarcely a sentence he speaks, hardly an epigram or a retort which falls from his lips, which does not bespeak familiarity with the great ones of antiquity. It was but a few months before this celebrated warning was given that he concluded one of his happiest speeches with a line from the *Æneid*, which, if it was not argument, had an application so apposite as to elicit the tumultuous applause of the House. Why should he deny to another generation the arts which taught himself to rise, and which he calls in aid so powerfully to maintain the high distinction he has so worthily attained! So I can conceive some successful merchant, whose

Rich argosies with portly sail,  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,

sitting in his well-earned ease, with the trophies of his enormous wealth all around his luxurious chamber, benignly warning his younger friends against the dangers of trade, and the deceitfulness of riches, just before he starts for the City to conclude another venture by which he expects to double his fortune.



I concur, however, with much of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, although by no means with its application to our University system. The great evil which he describes in the southern seats of learning does not obtain with us. The evil is, not only that even those who excel devote their time too exclusively to one branch of learning, but that there is no retreat or outlet for those who do not excel. The aptitude for the acquisition of languages is a gift which Nature bestows in very varying degrees. To some it comes early, to some late, to some never. Many a man of great capacity, strong energy, born to be the leader of men, has toiled out his youthful years not only in vain, but in mortification and anguish, because such learning was dissonant to the tone and turn of his power of acquirement. But with us, our College life holds out invitations from all the avenues of knowledge, and those to whom classics are distasteful may find ample opportunity for cultivating the tendencies in which they hope to excel. This is an important topic, well worthy of the attention of the student. The ruling passion is not more the key to the character than the ruling power is to the cultivation of the mind. Some men go through life without distinction simply because their lot has been cast, or a misplaced ambition has left them, in an uncongenial sphere. There is an instinctive sense which Nature supplies on this subject, to which it is wise to listen. It is entirely distinct from slowness of progress, or want of early success. A man generally has a monitor within which tells him in what line he is qualified to excel, and which upholds and inspires him with confidence, even after repeated failures. When Sheridan broke down in his first speech in the House of Commons, so far from daunting him, the incident redoubled his resolution. "I know it is in me," he said, "and it shall come out." Inward whisperings of this kind, joined to energy and will, have often, in the end, exalted the low and backward student to a degree of excellence far ahead of his more rapid compeers. But, on the other hand, vanity, undue self-confidence, and unwillingness to confess inferiority, often impel the student to engage in a protracted and hopeless war against Nature, who tells

him plainly, would he but listen, that there are many pleasant paths in which she would gladly bear him company, but that in this she would go no farther.

I think, therefore, that our system has the great advantage of offering facilities in all departments of learning, and not compelling the reluctant and rebelling spirit to follow in unsympathetic ways. But shall we therefore discard those pleasant companions which have infused their language and their spirit so deeply, not into our speech only, but into every corner and cranny of our social, political, and judicial system, as to constitute an essential element of our life? Were it only for old acquaintance' sake, they would wield a spell over the generous mind. "Farewell, Horace, whom I hated so," said Byron, although he had the grace to add, "not for thy fault, but mine." But Byron's was a morbid mind, forgetful of benefits, but resentful of injuries. Had these ancients nothing to recommend them but their association with early days—joys and troubles, triumphs and failures, old friendships, old quarrels in the times of long ago—even those who, amid the dusty bypaths of busy life, have almost forgotten their features, would genially cherish their memory. But although, to a mind given to reduce everything to a utilitarian standard, it would be difficult to demonstrate that the best years of youth ought to be spent in learning a language which nobody speaks, written in an age of the world entirely different from our own, like many such propositions, this one contains only half the truth. The study is not vain, if pursued aright. The Classics are the heralds of noble thoughts, inciting to noble deeds. Studied with appreciation, they have a power to inspire the imagination, to quicken the pulsations of thought, to stir the loftier and nobler powers of the soul, which has a wonderfully refining influence on the intellect. One generous element inspires all the higher classical authors—the love of liberty, the pride of freedom, the hatred of oppression. It rings in the periods of Demosthenes, it pervades the strains of the Greek tragedians, it inspires the noble orations of Cicero. Even when they sang in the marble cage of the Augustan era, the voice of liberty

sounded in the strains of Virgil and Horace—sometimes in pride of freedom past, sometimes with a pathetic wail for its departure, sometimes in a burst of fiery assertion of its legitimate homage. It is striking to trace the dying struggles of Roman liberty in the ferocity of the satirists, the stern denunciations of the historians of the Empire. They show the tenacity with which they clung to that freedom on which brave Etruria flourished, and which made Republican, not Imperial, Rome the mistress of the world, and the teacher of all succeeding generations—

Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,  
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.  
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power  
And coward Vice that revels in her chains.  
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,  
They sought, O Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.<sup>1</sup>

But, while I cling to the ways of our ancestors, and refuse to part with the classic guides of our youth, they ought to be cultivated in such a way as to produce their legitimate effect on the judgment and the taste. What is called critical scholarship—by which I mean philological knowledge of the language, apart from that which the language is used to express—may, I think, be carried much too far. The classics deserve to be studied for the power and beauty of expression, in which noble, striking, memorable thoughts are embodied. If they are not worth studying for this reason, they are not worth studying at all. But when the main object of ten years of study is to know in how many different ways a particular thing might have been said in Athens 400 years before the Christian era, or whether this part of the verb or that was fashionable in the best Theban circles, or what the exact provincialisms are which even now show Livy to have been a Patavian—the elaborate trifling may well call for reform. The grandeur and glory of the composition, the breathing thoughts en-

<sup>1</sup> Non ante revellar

Exanimem quam te complectar, Roma, tuumque  
Nomen, Libertas, et inanem prosequar umbram.

LUCAN, *Phar.* ii. 310.

shrined in the burning words, the sublimity, the pathos, the inimitable elegance of the author—all disappear under this pedantic process. What should we think of a French or German lecturer on Shakspeare who should devote all his time to Collier's various readings, investigate in how many of the counties of England the initial H was dropped in Shakspeare's time, whether he pronounced the Roman capital Rome or Room, what was the precise force of the redoubled superlative in

That was the most unkindest cut of all ;

and should utterly omit to direct the attention of his pupils to the grandeur, the power, the wit, the knowledge of and feeling for all humanity, which have immortalised our great dramatist ?

Critical scholarship, in the sense in which I am now speaking of it, is no doubt the crowning attainment of the thorough scholar ; and if he have previously mastered the power of translation and composition, and has imbued himself with the real merits, spirit, and beauties of the author, is not to be decried or contemned by the student. But it has too much resemblance to many most interesting pursuits which are the fit amusements of a class blessed with money and leisure, but are scarcely suitable to those who are preparing for active life. The harmless insanities of a book-hunter, whose keenness in the pursuit of his peculiar game is excited not by its utility but by its rarity—not by the number of people who have read it or are likely to read it, but by their paucity—not by anything the book contains, but by the amount of margin it displays, which contains nothing—not by its accuracy, but by its errors—do harm to no one, and do in the end produce a wonderful amount of bibliographical knowledge. But, taken as a general rule, the inside of a book is more important than the outside, and the things said by the author are more material than the type in which they are printed. So the scholarship to be aimed at is that which shall infuse into the mind of the student the author's true scope and meaning. If this be done, the real object of learning is attained, and it is rather

marred than aided by minute dissection of the phraseology and syntax by which the meaning is conveyed. I have the strongest impression that Thucydides or Livy would have made but a poor figure in a critical examination on their histories, and that neither Cicero nor Demosthenes could have gained a first-class in classics in the hands of an Oxford examiner. Many of the rules our modern grammarians have laid down are like the laws of nature—they are simply the expression of sequences, more or less correct according as the instances of sequence are numerous or the reverse; but probably not one of the authors to which they are applied ever suspected, while they wrote, that they were guided by them.

On this topic of the study of the classics I have but one other remark to make. A man may be a first-rate classical scholar—he may be able to read, and may have read, every word, we shall say, of *Æschylus* or of *Cicero*—and yet may not have the most remote conception of what their works contain. Let us suppose that a French student takes up two of the most famous orations of modern times—Lord Palmerston's speech on Greece in 1850, and Mr. Bright's speech on the Crimean War in 1855. Lord Palmerston spoke for five hours; and probably two or three pages of Palmerston would be enough for a day's task. These pages are to be studied critically; with a dictionary beside the student, he is to find the meaning of every word he uses; to analyse the syntax of every sentence; to find parallel passages in Palmerston's works; to compare the Attic Palmerston with the Doric Bright, and discover how many expressions they have in common, and where they differ. How much, think you, would he know about Don Pacifico's claims or the Battle of Inkerman at the close of this interesting process? So, in any way, or on any system, in which the classics can be publicly taught, this disadvantage necessarily results. So many collateral associations are mixed up with the fragments, that the effect of the whole is lost, or at least obscured. Its continuity, on which its real merits entirely depend, is broken, and while you know the sentences, and even the words, the sense has been left far behind.

What, therefore, I would strongly urge on the student of the classics is, never to be content until continuous reading becomes easy and pleasant. I must say I set far more value on that attainment than on the deepest critical erudition. Then you can fathom the author's object and meaning; you can appreciate his plot or his argument, and understand the relations of the individual parts of the general design. Besides, all learning carries a certain irritation along with it. You hate the man who wrote the cramp passage which kept you out of bed, feverish and cross, till two in the morning. It is not in human nature not to detest him. But when you come to read him as you would your newspaper, his features are all changed. You would hardly recognise your crabbed companion in the genial comrade you have discovered; and at last you find out, what before was a mystery, how it came that so dull and dusty an old gentleman's works had been suffered to survive for 2000 years.

While, however, I have, with sufficient plainness of speech, indicated my views on the study of the classics, it is not to be supposed that I found my ideal in the Humanity Class in 1825. My old Professor, Mr. Pillans, survived for so many years, and maintained his vigour and energy so long, that I need not, even to this generation, stop to describe him. I cannot say that, faithful and eminent as his long career was, he was a successful professor in the sense in which I believe such a class might be taught. He was trammelled by an evil not of his creating, and which no efforts of his could surmount. The lethargy which I have described as spreading its pall over Scotland was nowhere so dense and so impenetrable as over the parish schools. With many creditable examples to the contrary, the average exhibited anything but a satisfactory state of efficiency. The result was to turn the Humanity Class into little more than a grammar school, and Pillans had to reduce his really fine taste and accomplished scholarship to the teaching to grown men the elements of Latinity. On this rock much of his power was wrecked; but no man could have done more for his Chair than he did. Where he

was truly of service to his students, and the benefit for which I shall ever owe him a debt of gratitude, was the high, gentlemanlike, lofty tone of feeling which he inspired, and his deep appreciation of the literary merits of the authors which we read. When a professor was obliged to guide country youths in tasks fit only for the second class of the High School, it is not wonderful that his zest for teaching should have become blunted; and of critical learning we had little. But he imparted what to me, at least, was far more valuable—a sense of the sublime and beautiful in composition, an appreciation of the arts of the poet and the orator; and taught us to read the Latin writers in the light of the influence they had exercised on the literature of England.

Here indeed lies the problem which our Universities have as yet failed to solve, as far as classical learning is concerned; and there is only one solution for it. Our students must arrive at the University in a more thorough state of preparation, if we expect our classical chairs to be taught with effect. Some have proposed a strict intransigent examination; but I look on that proposal as one tending simply to impoverish and depopulate the University, without curing, or indeed touching, the real evil. The remedy is to be found in raising the standard of our schools: a remedy which, I hope, will soon be applied.

Among the other professors in my time, Leslie, Hope, and Jameson were men of mark; but I cannot stop to delineate them. The two men who gave most tone and distinctive feeling to the University were John Wilson and Thomas Chalmers.

These are two names not unworthy to be remembered together. John Wilson was a man of varied and prodigious power; and a striking example of the influence which genius alone can exercise on the youthful mind. Professor of Moral Philosophy, in the chair of Dugald Stewart, and the successor of Thomas Brown, he hardly affected systematic instruction in mental science. Yet I found him, beyond all comparison, the most useful as well as the most attractive of the professors whom I attended. He was not the leader

of a metaphysical school; yet so great was his natural vigour of intellect, that it was evident he could with ease have had all the great masters in his grasp. His poetry, although overshadowed by greater names, is full of merit and sweetness; but was certainly not his strongest point, nor that on which his fame, to my mind, rests. But as a thinker, a writer, and an orator, he was pre-eminent. A listless ease marked all he did; but it was the lazy indolence of a lion not wishing to be disturbed; one who, when moved for the moment, showed, by a flash, rapid, brilliant, although too often temporary, how deep was the spirit which was stirred within. He exercised an inexpressible fascination over his students, compelling them to an amount of industry and labour which led to results far more precise and accurate than anything they heard from their preceptor's chair. I remember well how, with his tall, picturesque, and manly figure, he used to walk rapidly into the Hall, grope uneasily among a heap of crumpled papers, go on for a quarter of an hour, evidently with the wrong one, and then, the papers, right or wrong, being flung aside, would plunge into the middle of his subject, scattering over it illustrations drawn mainly from his own rich imagination, and strong power of reasoning—with a dash, now and then, of the wit for which he was so celebrated—and end, leaving his voice so charming, that although the topic remained little less exhausted than when he began, we eagerly resumed our studies to master it. My remembrance of the two sessions I spent with him is that of one long procession through a garden of flowers. Not a topic in the whole range of literature or mental philosophy was left untouched. However casual or inconsecutive the touch, it never was light. It left its mark behind it; and although the Professor was in no sense a profound philosopher, the native genius of the man made his class a spur and incentive to labour on the part of the students, which neither Dugald Stewart nor Brown could have surpassed.

Chalmers, I think, became Professor of Divinity in 1827-28. He was a marvellous orator. I heard in 1829 his famous speech on the Catholic Disabilities, and well



remember the wonderful enthusiasm it created. But I had heard him before on a different but striking occasion—in the year 1827. Having to write some Latin verses on a fox-chase, and learning that Chalmers was to preach in the High Church the annual sermon on Cruelty to Animals, I went to hear him, expecting, I must admit, to obtain some hints for my projected poem. Nor was I disappointed. The whole scene which I witnessed was peculiar and exciting. Those who only knew the man in his placid old age can form no conception of what his elocution was in his more vigorous days. The old church was crowded round the pillars and throughout every vacant corner of the ancient aisle; and the gestures of the preacher were marked by a vehemence which would have been grotesque but for the magic of his words. The dust flew from the pulpit cushion—his gown assumed all varieties of fantastic adjustment—he and his audience seemed carried along by some dithyrambic influence. As one excited and magnificent paragraph after another, listened to in rapt silence, terminated, there came the long-drawn sigh throughout the vast multitude, the reaction of intense attention. I shall never forget it. I was amazed, bewildered, entranced. It did much for my poem; not much, perhaps, against cruelty to animals; for a more vivid picture of a fox-chase I never heard.

Under the vigour of such a man it is not wonderful that new life was inspired, not only into the ranks of the students of Divinity, but into the academic circle itself. For two or three sessions the Divinity classes became fashionable. The Professor lectured on the Evidences of Christianity, and attracted large audiences from the general public. Political Economy also, a department for which he always had a predilection, engaged his attention at this time. But he too wove a spell round the young hearts, which beat so quickly at his words. His individuality was deeply impressed on those with whom he came into contact,—for he was not more powerful in public than winning and fascinating in private life. There was a simple kindness about the man which none could resist, and which was

as striking as his genius; and few of his students failed to carry with them into life the traces of the earnestness and devotion of their preceptor.

There was still another, and by no means unimportant, branch of my University training. I mean the Debating Societies. It was, I think, in the summer of 1827 that we formed the first Debating Society to which I belonged. It was formed on a model so unexceptionable that the mere thought of it makes me look back to it with respect and awe for our former selves. We met in a class-room of the old High School. We were to discuss nothing but classical subjects, and our orations were to be in Latin. Such was the original programme of the Classical Society, which, under its old name, but with little, I regret to say, of adherence to its original principles, continued to flourish for many years afterwards. But we were before or behind the times. Our Latin debates for the first session had the merit of brevity; but the speeches were undeniably dull, seldom fluent, and sometimes obscure. We were sustained mainly by the consciousness of the greatness of our aim, and the unquestionable, although perhaps impracticable, means by which we meant to attain it. But the age we lived in prevented us. The next session found us still engaged in classical subjects, but discussing them with less ambition but more animation in our mother tongue. The third found us plunged overhead in the wrath of politics, and more eloquent, sharp, and effective than any of us have ever been since, on the great engrossing question of Catholic Emancipation. From that day forward the Classical Society was a forcing bed for academic politicians: and we had some names among us which afterwards became famous, although most of them belonged to the post-Latin period. Mr. Samuel Warren, the author of *The Diary of a Late Physician*, ruled over the society with a mild but rather autocratic sway. He had a little advantage of us in years, and he had already published a pamphlet, which exalted him, in our eyes, to an immeasurable height. A very distinguished countryman of ours, whose recent elevation has gratified all classes on either side of the Tweed, Archibald

Campbell Tait, the Archbishop of Canterbury, exhibited in our mimic debates the same sound sense, solid learning, discretion, and dignity which has attended him in every step of his distinguished career. My friend Mr. Campbell Swinton maintained in that important assembly the principles and fortunes of the Conservative party with unflagging spirit, eloquence, and ability; so much so, that the recollection of those scenes makes me almost regret the exigencies of party. One other name I stop to mention, of one who also belonged to our ranks, and who afterwards earned for himself a distinction in the literature of his country—William Edmondstoune Aytoun—a light too early quenched—a genius, I believe, capable of higher and greater things even than those which he achieved. Even in those early days he developed a vein of literary power very original and genuine. I am not sure that in some of his later compositions he quite appreciated wherein his power lay. *Bon Gaultier* and the *Lays of the Cavaliers* exhibit his genius in its true colours. With a keen fancy, a wonderful ear for rhythm, and a refined sense of the ridiculous, he would have been the first ballad-writer and satirist of his times, if the pressure of other avocations, and a literary ambition not quite self-appreciative, had not diverted his efforts into other and less available channels. But he has left behind him quite enough to stamp him as one entitled to a niche in the Temple, and enough also to make even those who were not, as I was, of his personal friends, mourn over his untimely death. In Mr. Theodore Martin's affectionate and interesting *Memoir* will be found a ballad which he contributed to an Edinburgh University magazine in 1831, entitled "The Wandering Jew," which for power and expression is equal to any of his later compositions, and which indicates how easily, had he cultivated his Muse, he might have been the Béranger of his country.

My immediate predecessor, Mr. Carlyle, in the admirable address which he delivered on his inauguration, made some striking remarks, very characteristic, on the use and abuse of public speaking. He exalted the advantages of thoughtful, silent study, and somewhat depreciated the practice and

the merits of oratory. Nothing which falls from him is devoid either of weight or of interest; and it cannot be denied that a deep vein of truth, practical sense, and useful precept ran through his remarks on that subject. Thought without speech is doubtless much to be preferred to speech without thought; and the latter alternative is so frequent in the present day, that I do not wonder the philosopher brought down his lash heavily upon it. You will not be surprised that I should regard this topic from a point of view considerably different. But I cannot refrain from saying that, apart altogether from public or political questions, University debating may be exceedingly useful as an adjunct, as well as an impulse to study. A man never quite comprehends how little he knows until he tries to convey his knowledge to others; nor is there any discipline more suggestive or more instructive than the experiment of bringing our ideas, however crude or hastily formed, into collision with those of our comrades. Of course, to do justice to thought, it must be given action by expression; and though expression by writing is the more enduring, expression in speech is the more vivid, the more effective, and the more rapid. I rather think that disputation, or wrangling, has been too much neglected as a stimulus and aid to study. I have sneered at our well-meant, but too ambitious attempt, in 1827; but why should it be that, after spending ten years of our lives in acquiring a dead language, not one of us should be able to speak a sentence of it grammatically?

We call Latin a dead language—but why should it be dead, and who has killed it? It was alive 200 years ago among ourselves. I fancy no scholar of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, no student within any of our ancient Scottish Universities, but would have thought himself disgraced if he could not converse, ay, and dispute too, in classic Latin. When that high and mighty Prince, James the Sixth of Scotland, who was far from being the fool or the pedant the genius of Scott has painted him—I say nothing of his principles, which were thoroughly perverted—when that glory of Scotland returned to his deserted

kingdom, after seventeen years' absence, he regaled himself by a great Latin disputation at Stirling, in which he maintained a classic assault of arms against all learned comers. I am far from recommending a renewal of such festive meetings; they would probably be deficient in the liveliness suited to our modern tastes, the more so that to the great majority of the audience the performance would be chiefly dumb show. But if we are to learn Latin, why not learn to speak it; or rather, why give up learning to speak it? We all know what increased facility in learning and appreciating a foreign language the power of conversational expression gives. Yet this powerful engine of tuition is wholly abandoned.

I can see one occasion for this result, at least in the sister country. They pronounce Latin there in such a way that no one but an Englishman can understand it. I do not found this observation at all upon the assumption that the English mode of pronunciation may not be the right one. It may have descended lineally from the days of Agricola. My proposition is one entirely practical—that no one understands it but themselves, and that Continental scholars have a perverse habit of pronouncing the language in the same way as that which we have ourselves adopted from them. The origin of the English pronunciation of the vowels is a philological question of some interest; but the date when it came to be applied to Latin is very doubtful. I have seen it asserted that, after the Reformation, it was used as a test of orthodoxy and a means of detecting Popery, and that the students educated at the Continental seminaries betrayed themselves by the breadth of their pronunciation of the vowels in Greek and Latin. Be this as it may, I believe that among English scholars there is a tolerably widespread feeling that it would be better to recur to European practice, and thus render the acquisition of the dead languages more widely available.

If I were to pursue this topic I should be led into the general question of oratorical training, and a sketch of my more mature experience in the Speculative Society in my later years at College. But your time and my limits will

not permit. This vision of the past is done. The spell is broken. The forms I have conjured up for the objects of this hour have vanished, and you and I return again to the pursuits and labours of our lives. The past, on which I have been dwelling, has no reality but such as history has; one layer more on that pyramid of knowledge which rises toward heaven, and that is all. In its day that generation felt itself on the same pinnacle of attainment as some moderns of this day dream of, yet that space of forty years has left them far behind. It would be difficult to point out one proposition in science, philosophy, or politics, on which the sages of 1825 prided themselves, which has not been either refuted or superseded. All is changed. The discovery of the gold-fields has thinned off our surplus population, and solved a problem which sorely perplexed Chalmers and his fashionable auditors in 1828. The whole scope and fabric of politics has been so utterly changed, both in this country and the Continent, that all trace of identity has vanished. A new era has been initiated in mental science, and new idols are now worshipped in that fitful branch of philosophy. Railways intersect the world, and the electric telegraph girdles it. The geologists of 1825 would be laughed at at the British Association, even as those of 1869 may possibly be in a quarter of a century; the Bourbons have vanished; the Holy Alliance is dispersed; Greece and Italy are free once more; and even in Spain, the latest born of Europe, the star of liberty is descried on the horizon.

Therefore, while men may come and men may go, these laws of progress, which the hand of God has implanted in our breasts, will still hold on their course, rebuking the short-sighted vanity of the present, but encouraging us, by comparison with the past. I am no believer in the perfectibility of man. All this gorgeous structure on which we pride ourselves—all the advance we make from year to year in learning and in science—these gradual rounds of the tower which seems to rise so high—a breath may dissipate again as it has before. The classics we set so much store by—what are they but mere fragments of

shattered empires, in which while they flourished all the arts went onwards as rapidly as now? Yet buried columns and half-obliterated parchments are all that remain of them, and we have been only building again for the last thousand years the stately edifices which had been so suddenly destroyed. Progress depends on peace, and peace depends on many elements which are beyond our control. It is no improvement in our intellectual faculties, but the prevalence of a gentler and juster creed, which has given our age the pre-eminence we vaunt so proudly. We may go on to still prouder triumphs—and be it ours while we may to bear our part in them; but the mutability of this changing scene, and the consciousness how soon the fancied wisdom of the present may become the foolishness of the future, should warn off the sacred ground the footsteps of arrogance, self-confidence, and dogmatism.

In parting with you now, I have but few more words to say. You have placed me in a position of responsibility, and I do not intend that it shall be a sinecure in my hands. Nothing that concerns the interests of the students will fail to have an interest for me. Meanwhile, let the history of the past, as well as the aspirations of the future, spur on your energies to ingenuous labour. To such rewards as fame, and wealth, and distinction there is no royal road. These are days when such gifts are equitably bestowed by fortune, and labour alone can win them. Nor is she a hard taskmistress. Distasteful as she is at starting, those who serve her faithfully are ever loth to part with her, even although the glittering rewards are never gained. But there is little she cannot gain. Resolute labour, earnestly pursued, and carried out with indomitable will, seldom fails of its mark. It is the faltering and faint-hearted who fail in the race. He who waits, ready harnessed, for fortune, sooner or later finds her. It is he who, loitering or desponding, has drawn up his bark on the beach, omits the full but unexpected tide which would have wafted him to her shores—it is he who fails. Keep in mind, during all your academic career, how short and how valuable the years are. It is a trite reflection to tell you they will never return; but the more

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serious truth is, no future years laden with the same fruit will ever arrive. Never again will knowledge woo you in the same guise. Never again can you respond to her with the same fresh intellect, elastic energy, and buoyant, vacant heart. After the first cold plunge into the real work of life, the spring as well as the illusion of youth is over, and there is no harder lot than his—would his case were rarer!—who, having let slip the golden moments when such toil would have been easy, has to steal ill-spared fragments of time from his daily avocations to atone for the thoughtlessness and indifference of his college days.





**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**SIR WILLIAM STIRLING-MAXWELL**

**BART., K.T., LL.D., ETC.**

**LORD RECTOR**

**FEB. 5, 1872**



CHANCELLOR, VICE-CHANCELLOR, MEMBERS OF THE SENATUS,  
AND STUDENTS—My first duty to-day is to thank the  
students of the University for the honour they have con-  
ferred upon me in placing me in the chair of Rector. To  
have his name permanently connected, by the ties of an  
important office, with the metropolitan University, is an  
honour of which any Scotchman may justly be proud. To  
be the successor of Carlyle, Gladstone, and Moncreiff, is in  
itself no small distinction; and that distinction is in no  
slight degree enhanced by the circumstances of the recent  
election, and by the character and position of the learned  
gentleman to whom I have been preferred. At the bar  
and in Parliament, Sir Roundell Palmer<sup>1</sup> has achieved a  
foremost place amongst the jurists and statesmen of his  
country; and by his preference of political principle to the  
highest prize of his profession he has established a special  
claim to the regard and the confidence of his countrymen,  
and has naturally enlisted in his favour the enthusiasm and  
the suffrages of generous youth. In electing me instead of  
my distinguished opponent, I am well aware that the students  
have incurred the risk of depriving the University of possible  
service of a kind which I have no hope of being able to  
render. If occasion should arise to demand such service,  
I fear the University must submit to no inconsiderable loss.  
On the other hand, the accidents of living on this side the  
Tweed, and of having more time at my own disposal, enable  
me to perform the ordinary duties of this office with a  
punctuality which could not reasonably be expected from a  
forensic and Parliamentary leader, who may any day sit on  
the Woolsack. Of such qualifications for office as I happen

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Chancellor and 1st Earl of Selborne.—Ed.

to possess, I can assure those who placed me in the Rector's chair that it is my desire and intention to give the University the full benefit, and, in so doing, I hope in some degree to justify their confidence.

It is impossible, at least for those who have attained or who have passed middle life, to regard an audience such as I have now before me without interest and emotion. That precious heritage, time and opportunity, of which we have had our share, which so many of us have so egregiously squandered, which so few of us can honestly say we have made the most of, is now before you to waste or to improve. In your studies, here and elsewhere, you have learned by experience something of its value; and in the eminent persons who conduct the business and sustain the high reputation of the University, you have ever before your eyes models whose earnest and successful toil may stimulate you to follow their example. Many of you, no doubt, will walk in the ways of the older generation, and share our errors and our regrets. Even here, the cynic may say, "The thing which hath been is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done." That is true, no doubt, of the passing generation: we have probably seen its best; and we may esteem ourselves fortunate if we have also seen its worst. But no man can pretend to judge what your best may be. The future, with all its hopes and its possibilities, lies before you. For some of you may be in store the great prize of human endeavour—to achieve something which may enable you to leave the world somewhat better than you find it. Upon you collectively will depend the life and the ways, the moral and intellectual tendencies, of various circles of society in many scattered localities, and in no mean degree the complexion of our national fortunes. This thought must, I am sure, be ever in the minds of those whose duty it is daily to meet and address you in your various classes. It must therefore impress itself still more deeply upon the mind of one who comes here a stranger to most of you, and who enjoys through your kindness a single opportunity of offering some words of friendly greeting and counsel.

I would first urge on you all the necessity, above all things, of diligence in the studies of which this University is one of the chosen seats. You come here first to perfect yourselves in an art which you partially acquired elsewhere, the most important of all arts, the art of learning. For the successful practice of this art, of which life is the field, the faculties of perception, memory, and judgment each require to be exercised and strengthened and brought into the highest state of efficiency; and to that end, each of the branches of a liberal education has its special use. The second object of your studies is the acquisition of knowledge in itself useful, the furnishing of your minds with provision and ammunition for the voyage and the warfare of life—with oil for the intellectual lamp, which must be ready at hand if it is to be used to advantage. The order in which these two objects of education ought to be ranked—whether the ploughing of the mind be a more important part of university work than the sowing—has long been a question in dispute, and one which may well remain in suspense. The advocate of one can hardly exaggerate its importance, short of the error of disparaging the other. Johnson somewhere says, "Let it be always remembered that life is short, that knowledge is endless, and that many doubts deserve not to be resolved." This I venture to think is one of them. If there were any branch of your studies here that bore any analogy to the crank of prison discipline or the shot-drill of military service, where severe toil is compensated with nothing but the chance of strengthened muscle, there might be some ground for pressing for a solution of our doubt. But here no subject is submitted to you the mastering of which is not in itself a real and considerable gain.

It has lately been the fashion to depreciate the study of the ancient languages, and the crusade has had the more influence on the public mind that it has been led or recruited by some of the most brilliant of our classical scholars. On the other hand, classical literature has not wanted warm and eloquent defenders. I hope it may never lack diligent and successful students. It will hardly be pretended that a mastery over the Greek tongue—the most

perfect and flexible instrument of thought—and its younger sister Latin, or even a fair acquaintance with these tongues, and all the varied knowledge of men and things and speculation which such mastery or acquaintance implies, is not a most enviable and valuable possession. Even those who say our mother-tongue ought to be the language to which our days and nights should be chiefly devoted, will find it hard to point out a surer way to a practical grasp of the resources of English, than by confronting it with the pages of Thucydides and Tacitus, and searching its treasury for words of various hue to match their many-coloured diction. An accurate verbal knowledge of these great languages is not to be obtained without the expenditure of much patient labour, and without the mind of the student becoming imbued with the spirit of antique thought. But it is not mere verbal knowledge which your teachers here endeavour to convey to you. Their own writings have conclusively shown that their desire is to make you, for the time, citizens of Athens and of Rome—to make you to partake of the life of the old world, and to steep your minds in its art and philosophy. A man who is wholly ignorant of that world is but partially acquainted with the world of his own life, with the distant springs of its thought—the fountains of that unwritten law by which our beliefs, our hopes, and our daily conduct are fashioned and directed. He who is ignorant of the philosophy of him who taught the Athenians that self-knowledge was the most important of all knowledge, and that it was better to suffer evil than to do evil—is but imperfectly informed of the scope and higher significance of that later Teacher, who taught the Galileans—“Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye so unto them.”

The objections to classical teaching seem to be chiefly two—that it is more frequently than any other given in a specially inefficient manner, and that it occupies precious time that might have been better employed. The first objection was certainly true in my day. Classical Oxford sent forth men who pleaded as an excuse for wonderful ignorance of common things the Greek and Latin bondage

in which they had been held, and who yet had little Latin and less Greek. Their position might have been very painful had not mathematical Cambridge furnished her due quota of men equally free from all kinds of book knowledge, including mathematics. Now, I hope that this state of things is hardly possible. Every young man knows, and every teacher of youth knows, that at the portals of every profession, and of all the chief roads of life, there stands an examiner with a paper of questions in hand, who must be satisfied ere admission is obtained. No system or place of education was ever so bad that a good deal could not be learned under or in it by those who desired to learn; none will probably ever be so perfect that no idler can be sent empty away. The penalty paid by idleness is no surer now than it has always been; but instead of being paid through life in small instalments, so considerable a portion is now exacted at the threshold of life in one sum, that it is to be hoped its deterrent influence may be greater than of old.

The objection founded on the waste of time hardly admits of a general answer. Time should be certainly employed to the best advantage; and what the best advantage is must in each case much depend on the student's plan of life. A liberal education implies a competent knowledge of various branches of study, and no single branch should be pursued to the exclusion of any one of the rest. Of classical learning I would merely say, that in order to obtain a sure hold of it, I would be willing, if need were, to postpone to a later period other accomplishments which, such hold obtained, would be the more easily within my reach. But I am far from desiring to disturb the ancient equality of the Muses by placing one of the sisterhood on an eminence. I would rather say that the student who is conscious of a strong preference for one of them should find in that preference a reason for paying some court to the others. Expand and cultivate by all means in your power your sympathies with every kind of intellectual endeavour. Studies which in their first aspect are not joyous but grievous are probably those from which most satisfaction and profit may be gained.



if they be manfully grappled with and overcome. Life is certain to present, even to the most favoured, some tasks which are tough, distasteful, and repulsive; and he who in his scholastic training has learned to cope with such tasks and conquer them will be best prepared to breast the hill of difficulty when the path of duty lies over its summit. The sages of the old world discovered long ago that the whole circle of knowledge was embraced by a single chain, and the more firmly we can grasp, and the farther we can follow this noble zone, the better for the vigour of our mental faculties and our human sympathies.

I would earnestly impress upon you the advantage of cultivating a taste for the investigation of truth, as the safest, the purest, and most lasting of all pleasures. Many of those who have been most eminent in the practical work of life have testified to the benefits they derived from the prosecution of some study, apart from their special work, and the effect of such study in preserving the elasticity of their minds. Many here present could furnish similar testimony. The only difficulty is to choose the field, out of fields so many and so vast. Science, art, philosophy, history, literature, each points the way to an endless library of its own. In history alone, how considerable is the area of which every student must make up his mind to remain in comparative ignorance. It is now about 250 years since Robert Burton, one of the most famous of our English *helluones librorum*, sounded the praises of Sir Thomas Bodley, and that great Oxford library, which our own King James wished to have for his prison, if fate ever made him a prisoner, where he might pass his life chained amongst books—*his catenis illigari, cum hisce captivis concatenatis ætatem agere*.<sup>1</sup> Burton speaks with peculiar pride of the writers of his time who dealt in history and topography, calling them mostly by their Latinised names—Braunus, Hogenbergius, Maginus, Merula, Boterus—amongst whom the name of Camden alone represents the historical genius of his own country, and is also one of the few who

<sup>1</sup> At his visit in 1605. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part 2, sec. 2, mem. 4. London, 1827. 2 vols. 8vo, i. p. 423.

still have some existence beyond the walls of the library. With the exception of Camden, Shakespeare, and a few chroniclers, the historical writers of this island have been born since Burton was laid beneath the pavement of the Cathedral of Christ Church. So late as 1754, David Hume could write that our language had produced no remarkable historical monument.<sup>1</sup> Ninety years later, in 1842 and 1843, how different was the aspect of English historical literature, when Dr. Arnold delivered those fine lectures on modern history which are, or ought to be, familiar to every historical student. Hume himself stood at the head of a noble phalanx of historians, of whom he was not the greatest. To the generation which has since elapsed belong a legionary list of names—Arnold himself, Milman, Grote, Macaulay, Merivale, Carlyle, Froude, Burton, Freeman, and many more. The new materials for history of nearly all the countries of Europe, in the shape of original papers of all kinds published by governments, learned societies, or private enterprise, have even more than kept pace with the number of new historians.

Let me offer to you, or recall to your memories, one of the counsels which Dr. Arnold gave to his students at Oxford:—"I cannot too earnestly advise every one who is resident in the University to seize this golden time for his own reading, whilst he has the riches of our libraries at his command, and before the pressure of actual life has come upon him, when the acquisition of knowledge is mostly out of the question, and we must be content to live upon what we have already gained."<sup>2</sup> Here it will be possible for you to follow to some fair extent his rules for historical reading. One of these is to select some particular period for investigation, and to make that investigation as thorough as time and means permit. Do not be content with modern histories, which, written in and for a later age, must be

<sup>1</sup> Of Camden's *History of Queen Elizabeth*, he remarks that "it is amongst the best historical productions which have yet been composed by any Englishman. It is well known that the English have not much excelled in that kind of literature."—*History of James I.* Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold's *Lectures on Modern History*, delivered at Oxford in 1841. London, 1860, 8vo, Lecture i. p. 69.

more or less coloured by its feelings, but go also to the writers who saw the events they describe. If, for example, you would study the Reformation struggle in Germany, the classic pages of Robertson will give you a fair, dispassionate summary of facts; but for the true colour and passion of the time, you must likewise read Protestant writers like Sleidan or Ascham, who can scarcely mention with patience the faith in which they were born and bred, and Catholic writers like Luis de Avila, who thought that the will of the House of Austria should be the law of the world. The by-ways of history, journals, memoirs, and travels will often afford more vivid glimpses of the life of the past than its royal roads, which traverse great cities and famous battle-fields. Nowhere now, so far as I know, will you find the manners, the philosophy, even the aspect of men and things as they were in France during the reigns of the later kings of the house of Valois so well photographed as in the *Essays* of Montaigne. Of the outward life of Italy during the same period a charming sketch has been preserved for us in the rough notes of the less-known *Journey*<sup>1</sup> of the same fascinating writer. Florence and Rome are there as he saw them, with their pageants and festivals, their chariot races and other antique games, their long religious processions; we can take the baths with him at Lucca, hear of the latest ravages of the Turk on the neighbouring coast, listen to the adventures of repentant renegades, the tales of the quacks and *improvvisatori*, and the songs of the peasantry "with," as he says, "lutes in their hands and Ariosto in their mouths."

In the whole noble history of De Thou—the greatest and the fairest history of his own time ever composed by any writer—I remember no passage which sends so clear a ray into the heart of that time as a small incident carelessly recorded in his own personal memoirs.<sup>2</sup> Trifling in itself, this incident, taken with its surrounding circumstances,

<sup>1</sup> *Journal du Voyage de Michel de Montaigne en Italie en 1580-1581.* Rome and Paris, 1774, 4to.

<sup>2</sup> Memoirs prefixed to the *Histoire Universelle*, etc., J. A. de Thou. London, 1734, 16 vols. 4to, i. p. 178.

brings before us the troubled outer world of that stormy period, with a glimpse of the little quiet worlds of toil and thought of which the most tempestuous ages are likewise largely composed. De Thou was passing through one of the seats of the civil war in 1589. He had lately heard of the destruction of his household goods in the sack of La Fere, and was riding, in a very anxious frame of mind, into the town of Château Thierry about sunset. As he made his way through the streets, filled with armed men, a monk put his hand on his rein and stopped him. It turned out to be one Pierre Picherel, a great scholar and an old friend. De Thou eagerly asked the news, but the good man could tell him none; nothing but this, that in spite of the tumults he had been at work that day for fourteen hours on his *Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul*, which he had finished that very evening; and that he hoped the war would soon be over and allow him to publish it, for he was seventy-nine. That evening stroll of the commentator, taking the air, amongst the pikemen and musqueteers in the streets of Château Thierry, at the close of his life's labour, as a characteristic picture of the literary life of the sixteenth century, may match that other picture so well known to us all, of the literary life of the eighteenth, of Gibbon in his *berceau* walk by the moonlit shore of Lake Leman.

A small historical field carefully traversed and examined by all the lights that can be brought to bear on it, will do more to inform the mind of the student than a rapid survey of a wider area. It will tend to form habits of accuracy, and strengthen the capacity for seeking for evidence, and weighing it when found. The value of cultivating the judicial faculties can hardly be over-estimated. If these be largely and seriously exercised on the men and events of the past, they will be less likely to fail us when brought to bear on those of our own time. I was present last June at the first meeting of the Senate of the University of London, after the death of Mr. Grote, who had for many years usually presided over that body as Vice-Chancellor. In the brief and touching tributes to the memory of a great

and good man then spoken, by old friends and contemporaries, out of the fulness of their hearts, I well remember the prominence that was given to his love of justice—to the ever-present desire to give every man his due—which marked the writings of the historian no less than the conduct of the man. In the remarkable funeral sermon, preached a few days afterwards in Westminster Abbey, the eloquent Dean was able to say of him, what many in a vast audience could confirm from their own knowledge, that “to be just was the motive and controlling check of his whole intellectual life”; and he recalled to Mr. Grote’s friends his habit “of slow, deliberate enunciation, with which, even on trivial matters, he would drop out syllable by syllable his slow unimpassioned judgments, as though he feared a single phrase should escape him that was not absolutely true.”<sup>1</sup> This trait of a great man lately taken from amongst us, honoured and loved by many friends differing widely in other things from each other, I commend to your notice. With a very earnest desire to say something that may dwell in your memories, I have no better advice to offer than that you should cultivate a similar spirit.

This, I suppose, was an important element in the condition of mind St. Paul had in view when he told the first bishop of Crete to exhort the young men there to be “sober-minded.” Sober-mindedness implies candour, patience, discrimination; it is to analyse and compare, and to be slow to set up our own experience as a general standard. An Englishman, new to the Highlands, passing through a northern deer-forest, remarked to his native companion that he was surprised to see no trees there. “Trees,” said the Highlander, with undisguised contempt, “Wha ever heard tell o’ trees in a forest?” Each was partly in the right; the word forest having different meanings beside the Severn and the Spey. But men with no wider difference between them than this have frequently come to blows, actual or metaphorical, on various important subjects for want of a

<sup>1</sup> *The Religious Aspect of History*, a Sermon preached at Westminster, June 25, 1871, by A. P. Stanley, D.D., Dean of Westminster. London, 1871, 8vo, p. 6.

little sober-mindedness. It is one of the few drawbacks to be set against the advantages of our free party government, that this virtue is somewhat rare, and perhaps not very popular. Our political habits and modes of thought are not very favourable to its growth. Political chiefs, possibly from the necessity of the case, are much addicted to blowing their own trumpets,—each lost in admiration of his own exploits—

Like Katterfelto with his hair on end  
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.

If now and then a prominent politician takes a more calm and dispassionate view of affairs, it is not from those actively engaged in politics that his words meet with most approval. I hope the education furnished by our Universities will be found each year to promote more and more that cool judgment which, making itself felt in various centres of thought, is as the real ballast of the State vessel. There certainly never was a time when the character and tendencies of our youth were of greater importance to the nation. We have amongst us a body of politicians, considerable both in numbers and ability, whose motto seems to be, “Whatever is, is *worst*.” Their course of procedure is to point to this or that institution, and demand of mankind in general why it ought not to be abolished. The monarchy has been lately pointed at in this interrogative way; but the illness of the Prince of Wales and the national feeling which it evoked has proved that he who, a generation ago, was hailed by a great imaginative writer as the “Child of the Islands” is still regarded as their eldest hope. Still it is probable that we shall hear more of these questions, and that the solution of them may be in the hands of your generation. In this view, I would say, study the history of your country and its greatness, and examine the institutions it is proposed to destroy; study the history of other lands, and examine the nature and working of the institutions in favour of which it is proposed to supersede our own. After such preparation, public questions will be approached with less passion as well as more knowledge of

the magnitude of the interests involved. As to party, I would say, be slow to form any ties of that kind. Think once, twice, even thrice, before adopting any party shibboleth; and remember that saying it backwards has a very unpleasant sound, though many eminent men have tried hard to make the performance euphonious. Changes of opinion are inevitable as circumstances change; but the reasons that men give for passing from party to party generally show that the process is not satisfactory even to themselves. A very frequent reason, I believe, is, that in youth they have been too eager for the fray, have hastily assumed armour which they had not proved, and have expressed the opinions of others before they had formed their own. "When I was a child," said the able historian of the *Norman Conquest*, Mr. Freeman, at Bradford, a few days ago—"when I was a child I was a Tory, but when I became a man I put away Toryism and all other childish things."<sup>1</sup> Another great writer, Southey, when twitted with the Radicalism of his young days, used to say, "I am no more ashamed of having been a Radical than of having been a boy." In fact "Marry in haste and repent at leisure" is a proverb that may be borne in mind with advantage in the choice of a party as well as of a wife. Better "long choosing and beginning late" than beginning early and choosing wrong.

It is not only in questions political that you will find occasion to cultivate sober-mindedness. Religion and the relations of man to the unseen world are studied with greater diligence, probably engage the serious attention of a larger number of minds, than at any previous period. I believe they are discussed now with somewhat more moderation than they were in times within my recollection, and that there is amongst the better combatants of the two camps of authority and free inquiry a sincere desire to understand each other's arguments and views. There is, however, still much room for more sober-mindedness. This is not the time or place to enter upon any of these disputed questions. But to those of you who, professionally or by

<sup>1</sup> Speech at a Ballot-Meeting at Bradford, January 22, 1872, reported in *Scotsman*, 23rd January.

preference, may be called to deal with them, I would submit some suggestions. The problems now debated by many thoughtful minds appear to us of the highest interest and importance. Yet they are perhaps not higher or deeper than various other problems which agitated States and Churches in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and which have been swept unsolved into the limbo of vanity or indifference. Is it not possible that some of our favourite topics may in turn be unable to get a hearing from our descendants? For the mass of mankind, the right of what is called free inquiry can never be anything more than the right of holding their judgments altogether in suspense, or of transferring their allegiance from one authority to another. To a select few, equipped with all the appliances of learning and leisure, it may become something more; and to many, especially of the young, its attractions are irresistible. For them there is always the hope of reaching some mountain-top in the cloudland, some *terra firma* in the chaos, which has been inaccessible to previous explorers. It is easy to see that the antagonistic principles of faith and doubt have each in turn played a great part in the advancement of mankind in virtue and happiness; but when they come into collision in particular cases, the adjustment of their respective claims is an operation so difficult and delicate, and involves so many collateral considerations, that wise men will probably not be the first to speak. Rash and crude speculations on these subjects are always to be reprehended, whether they take the form of attack on received opinions or of defence of these. 'It is clearly dishonest for a man to profess to teach things which he does not know, or only imperfectly knows; and I hope the day will come when such teaching, on whatever subject, will be no less discredited than it is discreditable. A sensitive conscience such as he ought to possess who presumes to exercise the function of directing the consciences of others, would be more uneasy under the false imputation of knowledge than of ignorance. The Socrates of Plato, in his *Apology*, is made to complain that superhuman wisdom has been ascribed to him; and that his character has thereby been taken away. He considered it



necessary to protest against the imputed merit, and would have esteemed the assumption of it by himself a crime. Let me commend to your notice the rule of Descartes—the first of the code which he composed for the guidance of his own mind—"Never to receive anything for truth which I do not clearly know to be true; that is, carefully to avoid haste and prejudice, and to include in my judgment nothing which does not present itself so clearly and distinctly to my mind as to take away all occasion of doubt." If any considerable number of men could be induced to walk by this rule, how blessed a calm would descend upon many places now filled with noise and confusion! How many of our intellectual battle-fields would be left with "their lances unlifted, their trumpets unblown," ready for the ploughshare of profitable industry; how much speech which can be hardly called even silver, would be hushed in a happy and golden silence!

I cannot close this address without adverting to a subject which has attracted much attention, especially in this place—the University education of women. Few of us, I believe, will be disposed to deny that the thanks of society are due to the learned persons who have sought to extend to women the higher cultivation which has, till lately, been monopolised by men. For a good many years of his life every man has been under the exclusive care of women, dependent, in all things, no less on their good sense and enlightenment than on their affection and kindness, and probably exposed to more danger by their ignorance than by any other fault which has been detected in woman by the keen sagacity of man. I can see no surer way of improving the intelligence of boys and girls than by improving the intelligence of their mothers, and other women who are to watch over their most pliant and impressible years. I am therefore for teaching women everything that they desire to learn; for opening to them the doors of the highest oral instruction, as wide as the doors of book learning. It seems to me that they are entitled to this instruction by the great things they have done without it, by the distinctions which, even in countries where

universities are shut against them, they have obtained in almost every field of intellectual enterprise. If we can suppose that such exclusion from the higher places of education had weighed from time immemorial upon some given order of men, say men with red hair, it is open to question whether the Rufi of the world would have held their own, so well as women have done, in the battle of life.

With regard to medical education, upon which our minds have been chiefly exercised, there is probably more difference of opinion than upon the general question. Some of you are perhaps ready to agree with me in what I have now said, and yet would say, "Teach women anything and everything else, but don't let them meddle with things medical and surgical." Now, on this question I have a fair right to say that the members of this University Court are, or were a few weeks ago, amongst the best-informed persons in the world. We had the advantage of hearing, on the appeal of the female students against a recent decision of the Senatus, six speeches from six eminent professors, three on a side, quite exhaustive on the subject, but so briefly reported in the newspapers that those who were not present have but a very imperfect idea of the eloquence, learning, and humour with which the subject was handled. The chief arguments against the medical instruction of women were these two—that it has not hitherto been the custom to give it; and that for a very large number, perhaps a majority, of women, the medical profession would be an unsuitable calling. In the second of these arguments, I believe there is so much of truth as will account for the custom which the first alleges. The argument arising from custom may, I think, be met by another custom of no less venerable antiquity. From the earliest times woman has been the presiding genius of the sick-room, often the sole medical attendant, always the physician's first lieutenant. I have never heard of the time or place in which, at those seasons "when anguish wrings the brow," it was the custom to conduct to the door the being whom the poet apostrophises as the "ministering angel," and bolt it against her

until the knife or the drug had had their will of the patient. So long as it is probable that women will continue to minister to their sick children and husbands, and to be charged with the responsibility of fulfilling the doctor's directions, I must hear some argument more convincing than I have yet heard why they are to be debarred from learning the scientific grounds of the art of which they are so often the empirical practitioners, or the docile and intelligent instruments. But, in truth, the experience of other countries has settled the question. The medical profession is, I am informed, successfully exercised by many women, both in America and on the Continent of Europe. I was lately told of a countryman of our own undertaking a journey for the purpose of placing himself under the care of a female doctor in Italy. If I chose to mention his name, it would be well known to you all as one with which practical good sense is associated no less than genius; and I am happy to be able to add that this cure justified his confidence.

While I hold these opinions, I may venture to state my impression that we are not likely, at least for a long time, to be inundated with female doctors. The number of persons who think that women ought to be admitted to the medical profession is obviously very large; the number of women seeking admission to the profession is apparently very small. It is a very significant fact that few Scotchwomen have sought it in this University.<sup>1</sup> There are obvious reasons why only a select few should enter so arduous a career. The force of custom will, probably for long, still further winnow these few. Female opinion—so far as I have enjoyed any means of testing it—seems hardly in favour of compelling the sons of *Æsculapius* to share their authority with *Hygeia* and her sisterhood. Of course any single testimony on such a point is worth little; and I offer mine chiefly because it conflicts with the conclusion to which I have myself come.

<sup>1</sup> I said "*no Scotchwoman.*" Miss Jex-Blake, in a letter to the *Scotsman*, 6th February, in correction of this statement, informs me that there are two Scotchwomen amongst the female medical students at Edinburgh.

Having come to this conclusion, I cannot but also desire that the female students now enrolled in this University should obtain what they ask—namely, a complete medical education crowned by a degree. It is, however, more easy to express this desire than to discover the steps by which it may be accomplished. The case of the ladies who addressed the University Court is certainly one of considerable hardship, arising out of a misunderstanding; and I am sure I speak the sentiments of all my colleagues when I say, that if we saw any feasible way of relieving them from this hardship we should gladly pursue it. “You knew,” say these ladies, “that we were seeking medical instruction for the purpose of qualifying ourselves for the medical profession; you enrolled us amongst your *cives* in the usual form and subject to certain conditions; that we were eligible for degrees was not only never questioned, but by certain of your dealings with us it has been tacitly acknowledged; and we expect you to fulfil the compact we conceive you to have made.” I cannot but admit that the ladies have a strong case. I know there are high authorities who hold that matriculation as a *civis* or student conveys no right but the right to certain instruction. However this may be, it is certain matriculation is the first and a necessary step to a degree; and the ladies may well have supposed that the granting of that implied the concession of the right to take all the other steps in due order. On the other hand, the female students were admitted subject to a regulation that they were to be taught in separate classes—a regulation the fitness of which appears to be generally acknowledged. I am also credibly informed, and I believe it is not denied, that they knew beforehand that certain Professors of the Medical Faculty would not give this separate instruction. It was perhaps natural that the ladies should think that admission as students implied admission to degrees. But I cannot believe that this opinion was largely held by men versed in university affairs. The right of conferring degrees on women has, so far as I know, never been exercised or even claimed by any University in these kingdoms; and a right never exercised or claimed may, I

presume, be held, for ancient institutions like our universities, to be non-existent. Is it easy to suppose that an important right like this could be created by the matriculation of a few female students in a single university? I confess that, for me, it is easier to suppose that the female students and their advisers have over-estimated the powers of the University or the University Court.

It is, in fact, on different and conflicting opinions about these powers that the controversy chiefly arises. The female students asked the Court to do one of three things: to authorise the appointment of special lecturers to give, in the University, qualifying lectures, in place of the professors who decline to hold separate classes for them; to ordain that the professors, so declining, shall do that which they have desired to do; or to extend, in the case of female students, the privilege granted by the ordinance of the University Commissioners to lecturers not being professors in a university—a privilege now restricted to four of the prescribed subjects of study. The two first of these things, the University Court, using the best lights available for their guidance, hold to be beyond their powers. The third course is technically open to us. We might propose certain changes in the ordinance which regulates medical graduation, and, with the written consent of the Chancellor, submit such a proposal to the judgment of Her Majesty in Council. But to make this proposal would imply an assumption on the part of the University Court that the University has the right of granting degrees to women. This very important assumption the Court does not consider it proper to make. As one—I believe the only one—of its members who had the honour of serving on the University Commission, I could not assume the existence of a right which I certainly never heard of during the life of the Commission. It is not for me to say what view the Privy Council might take of the matter. But I venture to think that the question is a very large one, involving many other questions that cannot be settled without the action of Parliament. Meanwhile, as the University Court finds itself unable to meet the wishes of the female students, it has stated the fact in language

which I trust is not open to any further misconception. Since entering the hall I have heard a report, which leads me to hope that a course may be suggested by which ladies may obtain some of the objects which they have in view; and I can only say that the University Court will consider any such suggestions with a strong desire that the hope may be realised.

I have now to announce my intention of offering a prize annually, during my tenure of office, of ten guineas for the best essay on a historical subject.



Derby (15. earl), Edward Henry Smith Stanley.

**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE**

**EDWARD HENRY, XV<sup>TH</sup> EARL OF DERBY**

**K.G., LL.D., ETC.**

**LORD RECTOR**

**"UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND TEACHING"**

**DEC. 18, 1875**





I WILL not waste time by expressing to you at length my gratitude for the high honour which you have conferred upon me. The chief place in a University like that of Edinburgh—even though honorary and temporary only—may well be an object of legitimate ambition equally to statesmen, to writers, and to men of science. You who confer that position are young; and it is always pleasant to men engaged in active duties to find that they have the sympathies of those who represent the future. You are students, with a wide range of ideas just opening to you, and I think you would not have chosen for your Rector any one whom you did not believe, however little qualified in other respects, to have a real and genuine sympathy with intellectual pursuits. On personal matters that is enough. And, now, how am I to address you? There is nothing less easy to a public speaker than to dwell on subjects which have at one time or another occupied everybody's mind, and to follow in a track which is beaten flat and plain by the feet of innumerable predecessors. On such topics you can scarcely avoid commonplace, except by wandering into paradox; and neither alternative is agreeable.

Therefore, gentlemen, do not suppose that I am here to preach you a lay sermon about your duties and your advantages in life. You know, better than I can tell you, what is to be said on these points. You know that your time here is limited; that if youth can live in a world of ideas, manhood is too often absorbed in narrow and personal interests; that you will never have again the leisure and freedom for study which you now possess; and that on the

use you make of these years the colour of your whole future life may depend. You know, too, that, for those of you who have to work in your respective professions for a living—and I take for granted that they form the great majority of the whole—the difference between an acquired habit of industry or of indolence resolves itself into this: that, in the one case, you will go to your daily duties cheerfully and happily; in the other, they will be to you a perpetual worry and vexation and grievance; while in either case the duties will equally have to be done under penalties which are not pleasant to contemplate. There is scarcely anything which is more entirely a matter of habit than working power. A man who has passed his life in a laborious profession is just as miserable when he finds himself with nothing to do as one who has done nothing for many years if suddenly thrown into heavy business.

We hear a great deal now and then of the mischief done to health by overwork; but I suspect, if cases of that kind come to be looked into, the mischief is generally due to mismanagement rather than to actual mental labour. Worry and excitement, and anxiety as to results, and nervous impatience to finish a task undertaken in haste, may often hurt and sometimes kill; intellectual exertion by itself—thought pure and simple—seldom, I believe, has injured anybody. One word I should like to say as to the object to which studies should be directed. I would not discourage honourable ambition. I am not blind to the advantages which a State gains by the existence among its citizens of a strong feeling of social emulation; but personally I am not a believer in what has been called the “gospel of getting on.” It is, for one thing, a gospel which can only be preached to a small minority. To be successful in the world’s sense means to have got over your neighbours’ heads; to be rich, as the word is used, means to be richer than your neighbour; and by the very nature of the case these are results which, if everybody aims at them, involve failure and disappointment to nine out of ten. We all start in life with the notion of beating our equals in the race; it is a useful stimulus at the outset of a career; but I think I have

noticed that as they go on in life most men who are worth their salt think more and more of doing their work as it ought to be done, and less of the return in fame or gratified vanity which it is likely to bring them.

College successes no doubt give a good start in life, and are a useful preparation for that keen professional competition which, whether we like it or not, is inevitable in most employments. I do not, assuredly, undervalue them in that respect. But if we are to look at the naked truth of the matter, I do not think I could honestly tell you that the highest literary, or artistic, or scientific culture always leads to what the vulgar call the substantial prizes of life. Many very illiterate persons have accumulated large fortunes by their own energy and sharpness. Even in the most intellectual professions many men have risen high, and filled considerable posts, and enjoyed widespread reputations, who knew but little outside the range of their professional work, though no doubt they knew that thoroughly well. Do not understand me as denying or doubting that habits of industry and mental training are an advantage for active life; they are an advantage and a very great one; but what I would urge upon you is that devotion to study, if it is to be real and sincere, must rest on motives far stronger, reasons more conclusive, than can be drawn from a calculation of chances in the great lottery of the world.

Culture may disappoint you if you seek it for what can be got out of it; it can never disappoint you if you seek it for itself. Say what we like about the lessening of social differences, there will always be a gulf not easily passed over, a difference which must make itself seen and felt, between the cultivated and the vacant intellect. The man who has read little and thought little, to whom history has no meaning and for whom literature has no existence, may prosper in business, but he prepares for himself a dull existence and a melancholy old age. There are many such; and sometimes you see them toiling on to the last, determined, as they say, to die in harness, not because they have any farther need to work—not even because their work continues to interest them, but because they have no other

interest and nothing else to turn to. I hardly know a more miserable alternative than for a wealthy and prosperous man either to exhaust his last years with needless labour—

Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease,

or else to sink into that vacuity and ennui which, to an active temperament, is often worse than even acute suffering.

But, gentlemen, that is not all. In our age—probably in most ages, but we can only speak of what we know—there is nothing more common among those who have read a little and thought a little than the union of strong convictions with very narrow intelligence. And next to the absence of convictions altogether, there is no mental condition that is socially less desirable, or politically more dangerous. *Cave hominem unius libri* is not an unmeaning phrase. No one so intolerant as the man who has got one idea firmly established in his head, and has not found room for a second. Sometimes he is the politician who thinks the British Constitution ought to be extended to all countries and all races; sometimes the theologian who believes that his own especial form of faith is destined to pervade the whole earth; sometimes the social reformer or philanthropist, who holds that the acceptance of his particular theory is all that is wanted to accomplish what such persons are apt to call the regeneration of mankind.

But most of us err more or less, I am afraid, in the same way. Those who possess few ideas are apt to be possessed by them. Many a man has died for a phrase which he did not understand; and many a man, having got hold of what may possibly be a truth, has regarded it ever after as *the* truth. Now, ideas are like fire—good servants, but bad masters; and no one can feel sure of retaining his mental balance, if he thinks at all, who has not in some measure realised to himself the vast variety of points of view from which every great question can be apprehended. History has many lessons; and not the least important of these lessons, in an age of large theories and hasty generalities, is that we learn not to reason on matters which concern mankind from an experience limited both in time and space.

To the ignorant man England is the world; the nineteenth century represents all time. To the student who has lived in the life of many countries and many ages, human existence is too complex to be embodied in any formula. He thinks of the disappointed expectations and the unfulfilled predictions which are the staple of history. He remembers how many burning questions have grown cold; how many immortal principles have not survived their authors; how small a space the great social or political problems of a few centuries ago take up in the records of our race; and he learns a lesson of wise and not unkindly scepticism. Napoleon predicting that within fifty years Europe would be either Republican or Cossack; Canning calling the South American Republics into existence, to redress the balance of the Old World; the French thinkers of the last century believing in the immediate downfall of what they called superstition; philanthropists, even in our own time, announcing that the great European wars had become out of date and impossible: these, and a hundred other instances, recur to his mind when sanguine men predict a future of unlimited progress, because progress has been the rule in Europe during the last 500 years; or when philosophers attempt to calculate the movements of the human mind as astronomers calculate the movements of a comet.

I do not wish unduly to magnify the benefits of literary culture; Nature will have her way; learning is not always wisdom, and it may even occasionally happen that a learned man shall be also a fool. But, at least, culture will save him from some of the most displeasing forms which unwisdom can assume. He is not likely to cant, and he is not likely to rant. He will not use cut-and-dry phrases without attaching any definite meaning to them—which I take to be the essence of cant; and he will not be inclined to treat very little matters as if they were big ones—which I take to be the secret of that peculiar kind of rhetoric which we call rant. And do not think that I am laying undue stress on trifles if I tell you of the value of a literary tone and habit of mind in teaching you how to speak and write. Words are things; *Le style, c'est l'homme*, as the French

say. You will seldom find a man credited with a clear judgment if he has caught the trick of expressing himself in an involved or pompous phraseology; and, on the other hand, many men have, and daily obtain a reputation for, greater capacity than they really possess, because they have acquired the art of putting their ideas, whatever these may be worth, in few and clear and well-selected words.

Of the gains derivable from natural science I do not trust myself to speak; my personal knowledge is too limited, and the subject is too vast. But so much as this I can see: that those who have in them a real and deep love of scientific research, whatever their position in other respects, are so far at least among the happiest of mankind. I do not tell you that to possess that taste—or rather to be possessed by it—is a matter of the will. I believe that with the most successful workers it is a question of temperament or of a predilection so early acquired as to resemble an instinct. But for those who have it, no passion is so absorbing, no labour is so assuredly its own reward (well that it is so, for other rewards are few); and they have the satisfaction of knowing that, while satisfying one of the deepest wants of their own natures, they are at the same time promoting in the most effectual manner the interests of mankind. Scientific discovery has this advantage over almost every other form of successful human effort, that its results are certain; that they are permanent; that whatever benefit grows out of them is world-wide. Not many of us can hope to extend the range of knowledge in however minute a degree; but to know and to apply the knowledge that has been gained by others, to have an intelligent appreciation of what is going on round us, is in itself one of the highest and most enduring of pleasures.

The vast development of science in our time makes it idle for any man to attempt to do more than select some one head of it for special study. To take all knowledge for one's province was probably impossible even to Bacon, and in Bacon's day—though he did not think so; it would in our age be absurd. And I believe—speaking with that caution which one ought to observe when on ground with

which one is not familiar—that for intellectual and self-regarding purposes the selection matters comparatively little. You cannot know more than a fraction of what has been done and thought—whether that fraction is a little larger or smaller matters not much; what is essential is to have mastered thoroughly what you do take in hand—to have acquired the scientific method and habit of thought; and in that I include accuracy of investigation, clearness of conception, and the conviction that under all phenomena, however confused the appearance they present, there is a regulating law, whether you can detect it or not. One great advantage of exact science, especially of mathematical science, is that it does not admit of half-knowledge. You may listen to a lecture, or read a book on any subject of popular interest, and go away thinking that you have caught the speaker's or writer's general meaning, though you may not have followed his details; with mathematics you cannot do that: you must either know a problem so that you can work it out, or become aware by the failure to work it that you do not know it at all. And in a time like ours, with all its varied and multiplied subjects of thought, and its innumerable channels of publicity, when it is almost the normal condition of most persons to be discussing questions which they imperfectly understand, there is peculiar utility in a process which absolutely compels exactness of thought, and which makes half-knowledge an impossible condition.

We used to hear a great deal some years ago—more, I think, than we do now—of the necessity of making science popular. I never have approved of that phrase, perhaps from not feeling sure what it means. You may make the results of science popular without much trouble; every child can be taught, for instance, the main facts which astronomy has brought to light, and the mass of mankind will accept them with just as implicit faith, and with just as much advantage to themselves, as they accepted in older times the systems which modern teaching has superseded. But that is not science. Science, in the strict sense of the word, can never be popular. It requires close attention, which to untrained persons is disagreeable, and the successful



following of it presupposes either special and exceptional aptitude, or a greater devotion of time than the bulk of persons in any class are able or willing to give to a non-paying pursuit. Science, above all, needs leisure, and I hope it is not utopian to look forward to the possibility of a far ampler provision being made for its prosecution by competent persons than exists at present.

I do not refer merely or principally to help from the State; though, speaking for myself, I should not grudge it in such a cause. But the spirit of patriotism which animated founders of schools and colleges, and public benefactors of former days, is not extinct; in some directions it is more flourishing than ever. An American banker lately gave half a million to help the poor of London; a Scotch gentleman, I believe, has given the same sum within the last few years in aid of the Kirk of Scotland; money is never wanting at either end of this island when men see their way to make a good use of it. When have schools, hospitals, public parks, museums, institutes been more abundant than at the present day? Science has no endowments, or next to none; but only because the interest in that class of subjects is comparatively new, and rich men, who want to do some good with their capital, have not looked much in that direction as yet.

Is it too sanguine a hope that we may see individual liberality take a form which hitherto it has rarely taken? Who knows how many discoveries might be worked out, how many conquests of man over Nature secured, if for, I don't say a numerous body, but even for some fifty or a hundred picked men, such modest provision were made that they might be set apart, free from other cares, for the double duty of advancing and of diffusing science? Who can measure what has already been lost to England and to the world, when intellects capable of the highest kind of original work have been wasted, not by choice, but necessity, on the common drudgery of everyday life? I know very well that to some extent that must continue to be the case; it is visionary to contemplate a state of society in which every man will find exactly the employment that suits him; in

human life, as in Nature, there will always be a vast apparent waste of power. But we may at least reduce that waste where we see it going on ; original capacity is not so common that we can afford to throw it away, nor so difficult to discover that we may excuse ourselves by saying we did not see it.

I am quite aware that endowments of all sorts are discountenanced by a certain class of thinkers, of whom I speak with respect, but who, I think, argue from the abuse of a thing against its use. The fact remains that the most enduring and valuable work done in the line of pure science will not bring a shilling to the man who does it ; and while that is so (and one does not see how it can be otherwise), there seems nothing unreasonable in saying that society shall, in one way or another, make provision for those who are doing so much for society. Nor do I see that the risk of jobbing in such matters is great. Men who work to make money, or men who care for reputation of the popular sort, do not choose such pursuits as those of which I am speaking. And making all allowance for the little jealousies and rivalries from which no profession is free, I believe that there is seldom any difficulty in picking out the best qualified candidates for professorships and appointments of that kind, where there is an honest wish to find them. I go into no detail. I indicate no special plan. I had rather, for my own part, see action taken by the community than by the State, or at least I should wish to see the community largely helping the action of the State ; but whatever is done, or whoever does it, I think that more liberal assistance in the prosecution of original scientific research is one of the recognised wants of our time.

How far that assistance can be obtained by the utilisation of ancient endowments is a question partly of principle, partly of detail. I do not agree with the extreme views which have been put forward on either side in regard to it. I cannot follow the reasoning of those who say that the State has no right to divert endowments from one purpose to another. There must be a regulating power somewhere, else changes which, by common consent, lapse of time has

made necessary could not be effected. And whether that power is vested in a Court of Justice or in a Commission, it is equally the power of the State. To my mind, so far as right is concerned, the Legislature may do what it chooses in regard to any endowment, without injustice, provided only that the rights of living individuals are respected. How far it is politic to use that power is another matter. Push its exercise too far, and you kill the bird that lays the golden eggs. Men give or leave funds, not for the promotion of useful public purposes in the abstract, but for some special form of public usefulness that has taken their fancy. You never hear of a fortune left to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to employ as he thinks best for the public service. One man cares for schools, another for hospitals, and so forth; and unless intending benefactors have a reasonable security that the general purpose for which they leave their money will be respected, the stream will soon dry up. More than that, I consider, they ought not to ask. Respect the founder's object, but use your own discretion as to the means; if you do not do the first, you will have no new endowments; if you neglect the last, those which you have will be of no use.

You will not expect me, in the few and desultory remarks which are all I can hope to lay before you, to enter into a comprehensive survey of the working of your University system, or into a comparison between it and that which prevails in England. One advantage you undoubtedly have here: your Universities are more popular, their benefits extend to a larger class, and both rule and custom have combined to make access to them less expensive than with us in the South. In that respect I hope much will be done—something has been done already—to imitate the example which you have set. I suppose also it is certain that Scotland has a considerable priority in point of time as regards the variety of studies introduced. Nobody could now dispute that the old Oxford and Cambridge routine of classics and mathematics—classics predominating at the one University, and mathematics at the other—was unduly narrow and exclusive. It used to be literally true

in my time, thirty years ago, that a Senior Wrangler might leave Cambridge, having taken the highest honour that Cambridge could give him, and yet with only a slight and rudimentary knowledge of anything outside the range of mathematical science; while those who went in for classical studies were subjected to the weary and unprofitable drudgery of cramming up a certain quantity of mathematics for the final examination, without which competition for classical honours was not allowed. I have a lively recollection of that process—the only distinct impression which it has left on my mind being this, that I should not have known, without that personal experience, with what marvellous rapidity knowledge crammed up for a special purpose and never assimilated is apt to disappear. In England, all that has been changed, and there is probably as great a variety of studies as here.

But it is not easy in avoiding one error to escape its opposite. You recollect the old saying of the human mind being like a drunken man on horseback: prop him up on one side, and he tumbles off on the other. And as our Universities are now, perhaps the chief danger is that where many things are attempted to be got up in a short time, they will not be learnt effectually. There is a battle which has been raging ever since I can remember between the supporters of teaching carried on by lectures mainly, and those whose faith is fixed in examinations. It is alleged against the examination system that it damps the zeal and eagerness of voluntary inquiry; that it converts that which ought to be a means to an end into the end itself; that it exercises the memory too exclusively; that it confines men's reading to subjects which will "pay," as the phrase goes; and that subjects so studied, not for their own sakes, but to serve a special and temporary purpose, are apt to be dropped in weariness and disgust when that purpose has been served. It is contended, on the other hand, that by merely listening to lectures, unless some effort is made to reproduce what has been heard, no lasting impression is produced on the mind; that lecturing tends to a popular and theoretical, rather than to an exact and careful, treat-

ment of questions discussed, and that where the knowledge required is not subjected to some test, men are apt to go away thinking they know a great deal more of the matter than they really do. That, I believe, is a fair summary of the arguments *pro* and *con*. It is not for me *tantas componere lites*, but I may say that there seems enough of truth in the objections raised on both sides to justify a serious consideration of them; and the inference I draw is, if you attend lectures, and rely on them mainly, test your own recollection of what you hear; write much, and write from memory, bearing in mind that while in listening the intellect is comparatively passive, its full activity is called out when you try to reproduce what you have listened to. If, on the other hand, a student is subjected to frequent examinations, he may be sure that his accuracy will be tested for him, and what he has most to guard against is a merely mechanical getting up of subjects—a mere giving out again of what has been poured into him, without any personal and independent exercise of thought.

There are various questions connected with University teaching on which I hesitate to express an opinion, which, however, I should perhaps not be justified in leaving wholly unnoticed. One is the question whether you can get out of these Universities all the work which they ought to do, and which in themselves they are qualified to do, unless some further and fuller provision for the education of boys be made in what are called secondary schools. Nobody disputes that in regard to primary instruction Scotland has taken an early lead over the rest of the United Kingdom, and has kept it. But I am told by those who ought to know that in regard to good middle-class schools there is a deficiency—a deficiency, let me say, of which we are equally conscious on the other side the Border—that, in consequence, many young men come up here less prepared to profit by University teaching than they ought and might, and that that defect necessarily to some extent reacts on the teaching of the University itself. If that be so—I am compelled to take my information at second hand—there is a great opening for improvement.

The ideal of educational reformers I take to be this: that whenever in a village school any lad, however poor, has shown really exceptional ability, he may be enabled by some moderate pecuniary help to go on with his education at a higher-class school, and if he still continues to distinguish himself there, that he may be passed on to one of these Universities, either to take his chance in an open profession, or to devote himself to a life of learning and teaching, as his circumstances and his character may lead him. That is an ideal which to the full extent has never been realised in any country, nor, perhaps, will it be; but some approach towards it may be made, and I know of no more useful manner in which a capitalist could dispose of superfluous wealth, and at the same time preserve his own name in honourable remembrance—which, however it may be sneered at as vanity, I take to be not an unworthy nor a foolish ambition—than by helping to construct one of these social ladders, by which young men unfriended, but of intellect and activity, may climb up into a position which will give their faculties fair play.

Another question on which I believe opinion is much divided is whether competition, having so long been the rule among learners, shall be extended to teachers also; whether and under what conditions lectures shall be allowed to be given, in each branch of study, by others besides the professors specially appointed for that purpose. It is argued in favour of such permission that competition stimulates energy, monopoly damps it; that even very capable and learned men may not always have the faculty of making such teaching acceptable; and that, in that not impossible case, it is better that the work should be done in part by some one else than that it should not be done at all. It is added that the system in question is already in force in the medical branch, and with good result; and that there is no reason to fear a different consequence if it be extended to Arts and to Law. The objection taken, if I understand it rightly, is that a competition of the kind proposed would discourage the best candidates from accepting professorships; would lower the status of the professors; and would lead

both them and their rivals to compete for number rather than for quality in their classes, to neglect the higher students, and to aim preferably at popularity among those of an average or lower type. It is scarcely for me, new to the whole controversy, to pronounce who is right and who is wrong; if I hinted at a preference, I should say that the dangers of the change do not seem to me as great as they are represented, while the advantages are obvious. If the professor in possession is competent, he has immense advantages over any extra-academical rival. If with these advantages he cannot hold his own, that result would seem to be due either to some defect on his part—possibly to some want of sympathy with his audience—or to eminent merit in the competitor. In either case one does not see what is gained by sending the competitor away.

It only remains to offer you my sincere excuses for the imperfection of these remarks, put together under the pressure of many and laborious occupations; to thank you for the patience with which you have heard me; to congratulate you on the progress and prosperity of Edinburgh University, as set forth in the recent able Address of your Principal; and to wish for you all (a better wish it is not in my power to frame) that your time of preparation here may be so passed that in after life you may not only maintain, but increase, the reputation of this ancient and famous seat of learning.

Devonshire (8. duke), Spencer Compton Cavendish.

ADDRESS

BY

THE MOST HONOURABLE  
SPENCER COMPTON CAVENDISH  
MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON

M.P., LL.D., ETC.

(AFTERWARDS VIII<sup>TH</sup> DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE)

LORD RECTOR

JAN. 31, 1879





IN addressing you to-day, I cannot claim to compete with the many distinguished scholars who have preceded me in an office which I am proud to hold. If I have any pretension to deserve the honour you have conferred upon me, it is due to my having for some years taken a part in the political life of this country; and though I am aware that matters of political controversy ought not to find a place on this occasion in what I shall have to say to you, yet there would be something incongruous in my attempting to direct your attention to any matters far removed from those on which I may be best qualified to speak.

Recent events must have pointed in a special manner to the great share in the government of the world which the people of these islands exercise. While the vastness of that share excites in different minds, different emotions; whilst various opinions are held as to the responsibilities undertaken, and the means of meeting them; as to the advantages conferred upon our own people and those with whom we are connected; as to the expediency of extending and strengthening on the one hand, or on the other of diminishing and loosening the ties which bind us to different communities—no one can for a moment doubt that it is the duty of a courageous and intelligent people to look boldly in the face the extent and nature of those responsibilities, together with the means at their disposal for undertaking them. These general remarks apply very especially to you whom I am now addressing. To older men they would appear commonplace, but to you they are apposite, not because they may possibly be new, but because to the young they can hardly be repeated too forcibly and

too often. It is true that in your hands, who are young, are placed the keys of the future. But your power is not merely prospective, for already your influence makes itself felt by those who look forward and endeavour to shape their conduct by the exigencies of the age.

It is not then for your sake only that I shall try to fix your attention upon that part in public affairs which it is the duty of every one to take. It is hard to exaggerate the force of public opinion in these days; and as public opinion is composed of individual opinions, the responsibility of forming and expressing his views should be always present to the mind of a good citizen. In the middle of the last century it really mattered very little what an ordinary man said or thought. Controversies were carried on and victories achieved by well-qualified champions, armed at all points, who tilted between the ranks of common men, and decided the issues of the fight. But that is no longer so. Success is now on the side of the great masses of mankind, and the opinion of any one who is earnest and eager is, like the heroism of the simple soldier, powerful, even though unobserved.

These remarks, if they are applicable to you because you are young, and soon about to become citizens of a great nation, are still more deserving of your attention as members of this ancient and noble University.

It is unnecessary to go back to the history of dead republics to trace the powerful influence upon politics of great academical bodies. I will only ask you to look back with me a very little way, and to consider the remarkable effect upon English politics during this century of the Universities of Scotland, more particularly that of the youngest of them—this University of Edinburgh.

At the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, the extravagances of the French Revolution had produced in the minds of most of the upper classes in this country, including some of the most enlightened and liberal statesmen, a natural but exaggerated reaction against popular principles, and even against those popular rights which had been long enjoyed by the British nation. The revulsion

caused in the mind of a politician so devoted to the cause of freedom as Mr. Burke is perhaps the most striking illustration of the force of this reaction. Nor was it confined to the writings and speeches of philosophers and statesmen. It was transformed into the most practical and vigorous action by the ministers of the day, and was used by them for the establishment of a thorough and unscrupulous tyranny. The rule of Lord Melville in Scotland seventy years ago can only be compared to the most overbearing and insolent despotisms of the Continent. The spirit of free inquiry and free speech vanished for the time from politics, but it continued to dwell where it had long before found a home, in the Universities of Scotland. Their teachers and professors did not attempt to interfere directly in the disputes which were then dividing friends and families in England. They adopted a wiser and securer method. They guided the speculations of their young pupils to those principles which are the foundations of politics; and from their teaching there arose a school of politicians to whose direct influence, aided by the cool and firm intellectual pressure of the Scottish people, it is mainly owing that the great reforms, or rather the revolutions of this century—the enfranchisement of the people in 1832, and of commerce in 1846—were steadfastly and temperately carried out.

Towards the end of the last century a Scotsman, whom in England we are accustomed to look upon as one of the first political philosophers of his day, Sir James Mackintosh, alluding to Edinburgh, wrote:—"I may truly say that it is not easy to conceive a university where industry was more general, where reading was more fashionable, where indolence and ignorance were more disreputable. Every mind was in a state of fermentation." It is to this fermentation of Scottish minds that we in other parts of the Empire owe so much. Adam Smith, in your sister University of Glasgow, and Robertson here, may be said to have founded that school of philosophical and practical politicians, which by strenuous efforts in the direction of liberty, triumphed finally over the legacy of prejudice

which Great Britain had inherited from the French Revolution. All the wisdom which could be gleaned from the writings of these teachers seems to have been concentrated in a man who—if the account given of him by his pupils be correct—was the greatest exciter of young minds since the days of Abélard in Paris.

Of Dugald Stewart, Mackintosh has said that he breathed the love of virtue into whole generations of pupils. It is certain that at his feet sat some of the most distinguished statesmen and politicians of the last generation. Lord Jeffrey, Francis Horner, and Henry Cockburn owed to him—as one of them puts it—their souls. “He who, either in the business of life or in the prosecution of philosophy,” says this last, “had occasion to recur to principles, always found that, either for study or practice, Stewart’s doctrines were his surest guide.” James Moncreiff, Brougham, Charles and Robert Grant, were his pupils. Among his audience were Allen, Thomas Campbell, Leyden, and Sydney Smith. Sir Walter Scott was a learner from him in youth and a friend through life. From England there came to hear him Henry Petty, afterwards Lord Lansdowne, and Henry Temple, afterwards Lord Palmerston. A few years later his two most distinguished pupils were William Lamb, one day to govern England under the title of Lord Melbourne, and John Russell, who died a few months ago full of years and honours.

There is no doubt that Stewart was a great inspirer of young men. “Had he lived in ancient times,” says Lord Cockburn, “his memory would have descended to us as that of one of the finest of the eloquent old sages. Flourishing in an age which requires all the dignity of morals to counteract the tendencies of physical pursuits and political convulsion, he has exalted the character of his country and his generation.”

Such was the man who, in the dark days of Tory ascendancy, whether deliberately or not, undertook the task of forming young minds which should be ready, when the chance offered, to assert those liberal principles, deduced from what some of us hold to be the highest experience

and truest teaching of philosophers and statesmen. It was not long before the seed Dugald Stewart had sown bore fruit in that literary enterprise which did so much to guide the rising force of public opinion, and finally changed the current of politics. Among the originators of the *Edinburgh Review*, there was not one whom he could not claim as a pupil. The warfare declared from an attic in the Old Town of Edinburgh was carried southwards across the Border into the British Parliament, and was ultimately conducted to a successful issue by these men and their fellows, who were students, and enthusiastic students, of this University of Edinburgh. And when we compare the state of the United Kingdom, and of Scotland in particular, existing at that time, when these men were young, with that which they bequeathed to their successors, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that this University exercised, through them, a powerful and most beneficial influence upon the political life of this country.

Is it possible that this influence should continue to be exercised, and how, and in what directions should it be fostered and trained? I shall not speak of the influence upon the moral character and intellectual progress of the country, which must be powerfully exerted by the teaching of a great University, though it must necessarily, through them, affect the political future of the nation.

In a free community such as ours, every one, in the station which he will be called on to fill, has a duty to the State, as well as to himself and his immediate neighbours, to perform; a duty which he may either earnestly execute, or which he may neglect, but which, if neglected, can be performed by no other, and results in a distinct and tangible loss to the nation.

I am not speaking of the training of those alone who are destined, either as legislators or as administrators, to take a direct share in the government of the country. But I may turn for a moment, on this point, to the vast increase in modern times and in this country, of those who may, without exaggeration, be said to have a share, and an important one, in the government of the country.

Whether wisely or unwisely, may be a matter of opinion, but without doubt the domain of government and of administrative activity shows a tendency to expand. Not only are there in our time many more millions to be governed both at home and abroad, but in the general opinion they require much more government than sufficed for their ancestors.

Primary education is recognised as the direct business of the State, and a constant watch is maintained on the manner in which secondary and higher schools, and even universities, are discharging their educational duties.

Sanitary matters, which include all the conditions affecting the public health, have within very recent times been added to the domain of government.

It is true that we no longer, as in former times, seek to regulate by law the course of trade, to prescribe by sumptuary enactments the scale of private expenditure, or to fix by statute the rate of the wages of industry. But we have undertaken functions, possibly more legitimate, but certainly scarcely less arduous, when the State took upon itself to regulate the hours of labour, and the conditions under which, in various employments, that labour should be exercised; when it was determined to regulate the contract which can be legally entered into by the ship-owner with the seaman, and to satisfy ourselves of the soundness of the vessel, no less than of the qualifications of the master and his subordinates. Numerous additional instances might be given, but these must be sufficient to convince you of the largely increased need which now exists for the supply of men trained for the duties of direct administration.

But the central Government has not yet absorbed all the functions of administration, and various important duties have been left, and many additional duties have been confided to local authorities, be they the country magistrates, or the municipal authorities, or the members of the boards to which so many miscellaneous tasks are now allotted.

Yet, much governed as we are, centrally and locally,

public administration would in my opinion utterly break down were it not for the unrecognised forms of government which have grown up among us, created by no legislation, nor even inherited from our ancestors.

In these days civilised nations are led rather than governed. They are led by their reason, by their feelings, by their passions; they are led by their necessities and their desires, by their fears, and by their hopes. And the men who lead them, and thus have a share in and render possible the task of government, are the authors and journalists, the members of learned professions, the employers and organisers of labour, and their innumerable subordinates, by whom in regular gradations the armies of industry and of commerce are marshalled. These are amongst the most powerful, if not the most conspicuous, agents of government at the present time.

And if the influence of these unrecognised rulers is necessary and powerful at home for the proper working of our social arrangements, how much more necessary is it for the maintenance of that complex system, without precedent in history, which is called the British Empire? It is not in Scotland that much has been heard of late from magniloquent orators, of the grandeur and strength of that empire; but Scotsmen have done their share, and more than their share, in founding it. It is hardly necessary for me to refer, before a Scottish audience, to the numbers of your countrymen who have spent arduous and honourable lives, away from friends and home, under the blazing skies of Bengal, or among the dangers of the North-West Frontier. It is enough to say that familiar Scottish names, the Frasers and the Grants, are as well known to the dwellers by Sutlej and Ganges as they are upon the Findhorn and the Spey. While among those who have commanded in the field there stand few names higher than those of Napier and of Colin Campbell; so among others who by personal daring and gentle demeanour have proved themselves true leaders of men, there is no more brilliant example in Indian border annals than that of your Scottish Borderer, Sir John Malcolm. Finally,



among civilians, in the foremost rank there is the Scotsman who consolidated British India, James Ramsay, Marquis of Dalhousie. So that I feel justified in repeating that Scotsmen have done their share in rearing up our British Empire, and they are at least as sensible as the people of any part of the kingdom, of the real advantages of maintaining it, and of doing their utmost to preserve the connection between the mother-country and its great offshoots and dependencies.

The strongest bonds which unite us and them are not administrative or legislative ties. Since the end of the last century all the world has known that we neither desire nor intend to preserve by force and against their will the connection between Great Britain and any of her colonies which has acquired practical self-government, and desires to separate from her. If the connection is to be maintained, it must be by the ties of sentiment and of mutual interest. It must be maintained by the pride which our distant fellow-countrymen take in the traditions and the glorious literature of what is still their own country. Such a sentiment need not be limited to a retrospect. Young and busy communities have not the leisure which is indispensable to literary and scientific pursuits; and it is to the mother-country that they will naturally turn for culture in its widest and truest sense.

They may also reasonably expect that from the old country they will receive not only the supplies of unskilled labour which in the earlier stages of their development are their first want, but also much of the professional skill and trained intelligence for the conduct of their industrial and commercial enterprises which increasing prosperity naturally demands.

I say then that you, whatever your career, have duties in connection with the government and ordering of the State, from which you cannot escape. How you will perform them depends mainly on the use which you may make of the time at your disposal during your residence at the University. It is here that you have the only leisure which will ever be yours during your lives. It is here

that you have time and opportunity to form opinions, and to grasp a firm hold of principles. Hereafter, when the hurry and struggle of life begins, it will be much if the principles so grasped are strong enough to help you to resist the sacrifice of opinions to the demands of what appears to be expediency.

What then is the University doing for you, and what use are you making of the advantages which the University offers?

It is my business to address myself rather to the students than to the authorities; and I shall not plunge into the controversies between the old and new schools of University education. But as one who has a right to a voice on the Council of your University, I will say this: that that seems to me to be a rational view of the functions of Universities, which insists that they should move not only with but in advance of the times. Universities are maintained not only to teach what has already been discovered, but to aid in the search after new truths; not only to teach some one or two kinds of knowledge, but to put young men in the way of learning all that is to be known. They are maintained for the purpose of equipping young men for their different journeys through life with that knowledge of how to acquire knowledge which is indispensable to every one of active mind. Their business is not to drive away to other teachers those desirous of acquiring that information which is wanted for the practical work of daily life, but to impart it more fully and on a broader basis than teachers of mere detail can offer.

We hear complaints, on the one hand, that Universities fail to give the education which is best adapted for modern requirements; and on the other, that they are sinking to the lower level of professional schools. But can they exercise higher functions than those of professional schools in the best sense? It is the province of Universities to offer the best professional and public education, and that is certainly not one which is either restricted to the sum of human knowledge as ascertained two hundred or fifty years ago, or one which is limited to the newly acquired results,

however important, of modern research. If I have digressed from the subject to which I was specially drawing your attention, it is because, in my opinion, the education, or rather the groundwork of the education, which will fit you for eminence in a professional career, is that which will also enable you to discharge that political service to the State which is your duty and your inheritance. Those studies which form and strengthen the judgment, which cultivate and discipline the imagination, which train the mind to think correctly and to concentrate its energy, which, in short, develop the moral and intellectual qualities according to a scientific or philosophical method, while they form the best foundation for the struggles of everyday life, are equally adapted for the proper exercise of the political influence, both direct and indirect, of a good citizen.

It may strike you that these are not times when politics deserve to monopolise much of the time which is so invaluable to every cultivated mind; that all the important principles underlying political questions are in this country at least practically established; and that nothing remains but their patient application, according to the slightly varying conditions of the hour. I do not believe that the experience of the past justifies us in supposing that the stage in human progress when established principles will rest secure from attack, will be reached yet awhile. Nor do I say such a state of things would be at all wholesome or desirable. Certainly, at this moment there are not wanting signs that principles which we imagined had been settled for us—one nearly two hundred years ago, the other more recently, but not less conclusively, about the middle of this century—are not yet quite safe from the dangers of reactionary onslaught.

It is not in my power, within the limits of this address, to enter fully into the controversies respecting the theory of our Constitution, and the respective powers of the Crown and of Parliament; nor can I discuss at length the whispers which have begun to circulate against the principles of Free Trade. These controversies have in England but just reached a practical stage, and may still be said to be in the

condition of academical discussion ; I may therefore without impropriety refer to them in this place as instances of my meaning.

Some doctrines which have recently been put forward with an appearance of authority must have fallen strangely upon Scottish ears.

Scotland had the inestimable advantage of receiving, early in her national life, something very nearly akin to a general system of education. As early as the fifteenth century, that Church which too often in Europe has stood as a synonym for stagnation and reactionary sympathies, here in Scotland appeared animated by a noble enthusiasm for knowledge. The Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen were founded. Many grammar schools were formed, and that curious ordinance of 1496 was enforced whereby all barons and freeholders of substance, under pain of a heavy fine, were bound to send their eldest sons to a grammar school until they had obtained a competent knowledge of Latin, and then for three years to a "schule of art and jure," till they had acquired a sufficient knowledge of law to distribute justice among the people.

On these foundations the statesmen of the Reformation and the Revolution built up that thorough system of elementary teaching which has made the Scottish people the best educated in the world. Whether inspired by this advanced system of education, or altogether by an inherent love of individual freedom, their turn for public affairs rapidly developed. In 1670 Bishop Burnet, who had visited Edinburgh, wrote :—"We were indeed amazed to see a poor commonalty so capable to argue on points of government, and on the bounds to be set to the power of princes in matters of religion." And further on he says, "This measure of knowledge was spread among the meanest of them, their cottagers and servants." About a century after the foundation of this University, some of its members wrote and published their protests in favour of extended liberty, and roughly assailed those political doctrines which were connected in Scottish minds with superstition and idolatry.

As early as 1579, George Buchanan dedicated his book *de Jure Regni* to his pupil the young king of Scotland, James VI., and he takes the opportunity of impressing upon his charge the doctrine that the high terms made use of in speaking of kings, such as "father," "shepherd of the people," and so on, implied that kings were instituted, not for themselves, but for the people. And he establishes further that the "king has no personal power of either making or interpreting law, but that he and all other magistrates rather work out and express the law, so that *Rex est lex loquens*."

Samuel Rutherford, a doctor of the sister University of St. Andrews, expounded fifty years later the doctrines of Buchanan, establishing the great principle, which, as you know, was in those days of paramount importance to the British nation, that the king is not above the law, and that he holds his power from the people.

These doctrines bore fruit in the Revolution of 1688; for nearly two hundred years they have appeared to be firmly established, and during that time the constant tendency has apparently been to increase the power of the representative, and especially the most popular branch of the representative, element of the constitution. It has hitherto been thought no reproach to this system of representative government that it has resulted in government by party. Such as it is, it has been the object of the veneration of our own people and of great statesmen of all political parties both at home and abroad, and it has become the model of free institutions for our own colonies, and even for foreign countries.

What would be the feelings and reflections of those early political reformers in Scotland, to whom I have referred, if they could learn that now, in the latter days of the nineteenth century, doubts are openly expressed of the merits of their system? that we are invited to go back to first principles, and discover by what combination the rival principles of force and of opinion can be brought into harmony; that we are told, amongst other startling assertions, that party government is an excrescence due to the

unnatural conduct of former sovereigns, which constituted a temporary eclipse of the Crown; that in fact the representative element had already nearly disappeared, and that by the Reform Act of 1832 the sovereign was once more brought into direct personal contact with his subjects in a government resting almost entirely on opinion; and finally, that it can be proved from reason and experience, that a House of Commons elected on the principle of numerical representation is utterly unqualified for the functions which its flatterers would thrust upon it, those functions being not only to decide on the direction of its internal interests, but to originate and control the course of foreign policy.

Now when doctrines such as these can be gravely put forward, it seems to me that the future may have in store for us issues to be decided not less momentous than any which have had to be decided by our forefathers. I am not seeking now to denounce or to controvert these propositions; I am only indicating to you their existence, and I say that it is the duty of every man who may have any political part to play—and I have shown you that there are few of you who will not—to prepare himself during this period of his education, before he goes out into the world, with a right understanding of the lessons which the history of his own and other nations teaches, and to endeavour to form those opinions upon which he will be able to base a just decision should he ever be called upon to choose between those institutions which he has inherited from his ancestors, and others which they have tried and found wanting.

I have left myself but little time to speak of another matter where we find results, as we supposed, firmly established—results of enlightened economical principles—once more placed upon their defence.

If there is one subject connected with politics which is more proper than any other to be studied at a University, that subject appears to me to be the science which is associated with the name of Adam Smith. It would be difficult to overrate the influence of this Scottish writer

upon British policy. The greatest of our prime ministers, Mr. Pitt, was the pupil in politics of Adam Smith. During his college life, he learnt from his works those principles on which, when he became minister, he at once proceeded to act. After he had restored the prosperity of the country, shattered by the ministry of Lord North and the American war, in announcing to Parliament his measures and their success, he explained the principles on which they were based, and acknowledged the source from which they were derived. Labour, he pointed out, was the foundation of wealth, and freedom of labour indispensable to the prosperity of the nation. "There is another cause," he said, after alluding to the exploring and enterprising spirit of British merchants, "even more satisfactory—that constant accumulation of capital, that constant tendency to increase, the operation of which is universally seen, in a greater or less proportion, whenever it is not obstructed by some public calamity, or by some mistaken or mischievous policy, but which must be conspicuous and rapid indeed in any country which has once arrived at an advanced stage of commercial prosperity. Simple and obvious as this principle is, and felt and observed, as it must have been, in a greater or less degree, from the earliest periods, I doubt whether it has ever been fully developed and sufficiently explained, but in the writings of an author of our own times, now unfortunately no more—I mean the author of a celebrated treatise on the *Wealth of Nations*—whose extensive knowledge of detail and depth of philosophical research will, I believe, furnish the best solution to every question connected with the history of commerce, or with the systems of political economy."

Mr. Pitt did not ignore the possibility of checks, or times of commercial weakness and depression; nor did he fear to expose the causes which lead to them. Prosperity, he knew from experience, was obviously and necessarily connected with the duration of peace; but he asserted, further, that it was equally due to firmly established constitutional principles. "What is it," he asked, "which has produced of late so rapid an advance, beyond what can be traced in

any other period of history? What but that, under the mild and just government of the illustrious princes of the family now on the throne, a general calm has prevailed through the country beyond what was ever before experienced? and we have also enjoyed in greater purity and perfection the benefit of those original principles of our constitution which were ascertained and established by the memorable events which closed the preceding century. This is the great and governing cause, the operation of which has given scope to all the other circumstances which I have enumerated."

Mr. Pitt, as a thoughtful and cool-headed historian has remarked, was the first English minister who really grasped the part which industry was to play in promoting the welfare of the world. But he was well aware that statesmen have to take into account many things besides the simple laws which govern the accumulation and distribution of wealth. He learnt from Adam Smith that, together with the plain economical law, there lay social and moral laws, governing the commercial and material prosperity of nations. "It is the union of liberty with law," he says, speaking of the constitution, "which, by raising a barrier equally firm against the encroachments of power and the violence of popular commotion, affords to property its just security, produces the exertion of genius and labour, the extent and solidity of credit, the circulation and increase of capital."

In the opinion of Mr. Pitt the financial condition of the country and its commercial prosperity was bound up with the inviolability of the constitution: that constitution which, he said, "we do not admire merely from traditional reverence, nor flatter from prejudice or habit, but which we cherish and value, because we know that it practically secures the tranquillity and welfare both of individuals and of the public, and provides, beyond any other form of government which has ever existed, for the real and useful ends which form at once the only true foundation and only rational object of all political societies."

Mr. Pitt was speaking during what may be called the



liberal half of his administration. The French Revolution had broken out, had been in active progress for four years, and still the English minister looked forward to a continuance of peace. Although he was opposed by Mr. Fox and the Whigs, he was carrying on the government of the country at that time upon principles—soon unfortunately to be relinquished—which we are accustomed to consider specially characteristic of the liberal party.

Such was the policy, and such were the doctrines, bound up inextricably with what have been called the “dry bones of political economy,” which Mr. Pitt deduced from the teaching of Adam Smith.

I appeal to you, his countrymen, to study for yourselves the science of which he is not unjustly regarded as the founder, and if you are satisfied of the truth of its conclusions, to defend them against attacks, whether invidious or open, from whatever quarter they may proceed.

I must now bid you farewell. I have addressed you as young men about to become citizens of a great nation, and as members of an illustrious and ancient University with noble traditions to maintain. It is impossible for me not to feel with pride and satisfaction that those traditions rest upon ideas which are in the highest sense liberal. The notions of liberty, the principle of the liberty of the human reason, a principle that embodies the idea that in everything progress is always possible, are part of your inheritance in this place. A true comprehension of this fact is the bright instrument for good which your sojourn here will put in your hands. I have alluded before to the temptation, which recurs so often in life, to sacrifice principle to what appears to be expediency. In like manner there is a risk of its being swept away by the clamorous waves of public opinion. You probably remember the passage in Greek literature where a great teacher warns the young that the public are their most dangerous corruptors. “When the world sits down at an assembly,” he says, “or in a court of law, or a theatre, or a camp, or at some other place of resort, and there is a great uproar, and they praise some things which are being said or done, and

blame others, equally exaggerating in both, shouting and clapping their hands, and the echo of the rocks and the place in which they are assembled redoubles the sound of the praise or blame—at such a time will not a young man's heart leap within him? Will the influences of education stem the tide of praise or blame, and not rather be carried away in the stream? And will he not rather have the notions of good and evil which the public in general have?—he will do as they do, and as they are such will he be!" It is in these moments of which the Athenian philosopher takes so desponding a view that a man has need to grasp firm hold of the principles which he has acquired in youth by calm reflection.

If you can fortify yourselves in this manner, you will have done your best to avail yourselves of the privileges and to maintain the traditions of your noble University.



Rosebery (5. earl), Archibald Philip Primrose.

ADDRESS

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
ARCHIBALD PHILIP  
V<sup>TH</sup> EARL OF ROSEBERY

K.G., LL.D., D.C.L.

LORD RECTOR

NOV. 4, 1882



I AM here to-day, gentlemen, to thank you for electing me Rector of your University, and therefore this is a proud, though embarrassing, occasion for me. I cannot pretend, and I shall not attempt to express all I feel. At such a moment I should be unworthy of your choice were I not the proudest and the humblest of mankind. The position of Lord Rector of this University is one to which the greatest of our fellow-countrymen have aspired. That you should have chosen me to fill it therefore may well exalt me, while on the other hand, visions of who my predecessors have been, of the grave responsibilities and greater possibilities of the office, of the splendid opportunity and the necessary shortcoming, may well come crowding over me, and cause my voice, nay, my knees, to fail me as I address this most impressive assembly. It would have been a high honour for me to have been elected thirty years hence, when I might at least have had the claims of age and experience. But I was younger than your Rectors usually are; I was already the Rector of another University; I had neither learning nor reputation to recommend me: yet you chose me in preference to one full of years and honours, and academical service, and European reputation. Moreover, we know that it is rare for any one to be a prophet in his own country; but I had the good fortune to be selected for distinction in the University of the capital, of which I am a citizen in sympathy, and a near neighbour in fact. You can well understand that all these facts fill me at this moment with a pride which is nearly akin to the deepest humility.

In this place, where you all knew him, it is unnecessary

to speak to you of Sir Robert Christison, nor am I competent to pay a tribute which should be worthy of his fame. What I can speak of from personal knowledge was his unwearied energy, his faithful performance of public duty, and his rare devotion to this University. We often met at the University Court, and I can never forget that old age, inclement weather, and indisposition were impotent to detain him from the discharge of his functions as assessor in that body. No rectorship indeed could have increased the honour in which he was held by this University, as we know from the splendid procession which followed him this year to his grave.

When, therefore, I say that I am proud of being chosen your Rector, you well know that it is from no sense of merit; and that I am free from the insanity of putting myself in any comparison, however remote, with Sir Robert Christison. None can say what it is at the moment that sways the fancy of youth: it may be political feeling; it may be a passing freak; it may be that that passion for something new which moved the Athenians of old has its influence in our Modern Athens too. I, at any rate, am too grateful and too satisfied to inquire. \

But there was one feature of that rectorial election which distinguished it among the three similar elections which were held that year. Both your candidates were Scotsmen, and, indeed, I cannot doubt that I owe my selection to my nationality alone; while in the other contests there was but one single Scottish candidate. I do not think that your action was taken on the mere cry of Scotland for the Scots, for that seems to me but a narrow feeling at best: a similar cry was the mainspring of a party in America which called itself, or was called, significantly enough, the "Know-nothings," and which has now disappeared: while it may be remembered that if other countries were to take reciprocal action, no nation, I am proud to say, would suffer as much as this. I suppose that you wished for a resident Rector, and chose your candidates accordingly. But all the same, that event set me thinking of what is Patriotism, of its adaptability to

our times and our circumstances, of its necessary limitations, of its real nature and force and utility; and it struck me that I could choose no more useful topic for my inaugural address, whenever it should be required of me. That moment of trial has at last arrived, and I now offer you a few observations on the subject I have mentioned. Few and feeble I fear you will think them; but the matter is large, and my opportunities for putting them together have been rare and occasional.

In the first place, allow me to remark that there is no word so prostituted as "patriotism." It is part of the base coinage of controversy. Every Government fails in it, and every Opposition glows with it. It dictates silence and speech, action and inaction, interference and abstention, with unvarying force and facility. It smiles impartially on the acceptance and the resignation of office; it impels people to enter and to quit public life with equal reason and equal precipitation. It urges to heroism, to self-sacrifice, to assassination and to incendiarism. It rebuilt Jerusalem and burned Moscow. It stabbed Marat, and put his bones in the Pantheon. It was the watchword of the Reign of Terror, and the motto of the guillotine. It raises statues to the people whom it lodges in dungeons. It patronises almost every crime and every virtue in history.

The freaks to which this unhappy word is subject, the company and costume in which it finds itself, the crime, volubility, and virtue which it inspires, deserve a separate history. But I am not here to record its vicissitudes. I will only offer a definition to serve my purpose to-day. Patriotism is the self-respect of race. It is a motive, or passion if you will, which has animated the noblest efforts, and inspired supreme heroism.

As regards our common allegiance to the empire, little need be said: it is the breath of our nostrils. If I were to descant on it there would be a general feeling that I might as well discourse on the old inspiring theme of *Virtus est bona res*. The patriotism I would speak of is more restricted in area, more limited in scope, but hardly less useful or less respectable;—I mean the feeling of affection



towards a nationality which is absorbed with others under a common government. The tendency of the age is to the agglomeration of races with a powerful centre, just as villages used to be built round castles; but it is on condition of respecting the various component elements. Now, it is difficult in some circumstances to unite with perfect compatibility the feeling for the nationality with loyalty to the centre. There is no such difficulty in Scotland. But the question is interesting how far the separate nationality may be asserted without danger to the common bond. That is a question too wide for me to discuss thoroughly to-day in all its bearings. Still, I may lay before you a few considerations which make me think it well that the sentiment of race should exist, and should exist vigorously; and I shall point out some of the ways in which it may be usefully exerted. The feeling in Scotland seems sometimes unexpectedly fierce, and sometimes unexpectedly dormant. I do not know that it is in any danger of extinction. It is probably more subject to misapplication; but it is liable to a serious and very natural decay; for it is apt to be considered as a rare specimen or an antiquarian relic: as Etruscan pottery or a toad in marble. Such a view, though not opposed to its existence, is fatal to its vitality: for it may be preserved as a mummy for centuries after it has ceased to have a vestige of life. I desire to-day not so much to extol its abstract virtue as its practical usefulness, which on consideration is hardly less obvious than its natural limit; and I shall deal more especially with the case of Scotland; firstly, because it is the case of which I am least ignorant; secondly, because I think that in England the sentiment of this lesser or particular patriotism, if I may so call it, is less fully developed, while in the case of Ireland the ground is so dangerous with

ignes

Suppositos cineri doloso,

that I may well be excused if I am unwilling to venture upon it.

In England I think this separate sentiment is weaker

than with us, for her wealth, her power, and her population make her feel herself to be Great Britain, with Ireland and Scotland as lesser gems in her diadem. Therefore, with an Englishman, the love of Great Britain means the love of England—the larger and lesser patriotisms are one. He speaks, for instance, of the English Government and the English army, without condescending to the terms British and Great Britain—not from heedlessness, but from self-concentration. Where the distinct English feeling shows itself is chiefly in an impatience, if I may so call it, of Scotsmen and Irishmen; perhaps not an unnatural emotion, but not one on which I propose to comment. When an Englishman conducts the government of a country, he at once concludes that it becomes English; the thinnest varnish of English law and English method makes it English to his eye. He is satisfied. Every part of the United Kingdom must be English because it is a part of the United Kingdom. Now and then, indeed, some political development excites a passing doubt, but he either spurns the doubt, or relegates the country which has caused it to the indolent category of the incomprehensible. It is a noble self-possession, characteristic of dominant races, without which England would not be what she is; but it is a dangerous guide. Where nations do not readily blend, their characters and humours must be studied. It is open to argument whether it is better that they should blend or not. But I wish to lay before you certain reasons why I believe it to be better that where the national type is of a self-sufficing character, they should not blend.

In the first place, we may assert with confidence that a race, however striking and distinguished, is none the worse for being varied. Nay, if the whole world were peopled by a single race, however perfect, life would lose much of its interest and charm. And we, as patriots, although we must wish all the races of the empire to possess certain qualities, cannot desire uniformity, any more than we can wish that all our manufacturers should engage in the same industry, or all our men of intellect in the same branch of inquiry. A great empire like the British should be a

sheet knit at the four corners, containing all manner of men, fitted for their separate climates and work and spheres of action, but honouring the common vessel which contains them; not like that massive glacier-mill, the Roman State, which rounded off the resisting bodies within it to a monotonous form, while it crushed and annihilated the weaker.

I will take, as an example of what I mean, the most compact aggregation of States which has been recently effected—I mean the Kingdom of Italy. There have been amalgamated within the last quarter of a century Rome, Naples, Piedmont, Tuscany, Sicily, Lombardy, Genoa, Venice, Parma, Lucca, and Modena, each of which was formerly a State boasting a separate and distinguished existence. When the repression that had weighed on them was removed, their vitality was found fresh and unimpaired, as vegetation thrives under the shelter of snow, and bursts forth on a thaw. But this life was distinct and different in its various forms. They are now one, not possibly without occasional discontent and some secret jealousy, but in the eyes of Europe one and indivisible. The advantages of a united government, the strength, the economy, the pride of life, are apparent. But would it not be too high a price to pay for even such a gain as this, that separate countries should become provinces in name as well as in fact, that these separate types should be effaced, and that nothing but a difference of physical appearance should be visible between Turin and Naples? I know well the danger to which we are exposed in speaking of Italy, for we are apt to take in some respects the point of view from which an American considers English matters. The American regards England as an ancestral garden and museum, in which he has a historical interest; he is therefore rather conservative with respect to it, and views innovation here with much the same feelings as a landowner does a railroad projected through his park. In the same way we regard Italy as the pleasure and gallery of the world, and are apt to consider the march of events there less as efforts of reform

than as invasions of the picturesque. Well, but I would urge that, for the sake of Italy herself, it is better to keep up the rich rivalry of great cities, which can borrow from each other's abundance of character and idea without losing the mould in which it casts its own citizens.

I take Italy then to illustrate the contention that in an empire obliteration is not harmony, nor monotony union, that if a race has ever been a separate civilised nation, it must still contain the qualities which made it so, which are therefore valuable, and part of the common stock of mankind; and that a government or a ruler who neglects or wars against these principles is not merely sinning against national life, but is wasting a source of power as clearly as a general who spikes his guns, or an admiral who scuttles his ships.

There is, indeed, a stronger case—the case of Austria. It would be too long to work out in detail, and, indeed, it might carry me beyond my point. But was Hungary ever a source of strength to Austria till she was recognised as Hungary, and treated as Hungary, and not as an Austrian province? Take the case of Poland. Russia has attempted the obliteration of Poland in that part of Poland which belongs to her; Austria has recognised and respected the nationality of Poland in her part. What is the result? Poland, in spite of Russia, is as Polish as ever; but in Austria she is loyal, and in Russia she is not.

These are extreme instances, I know. But from these extreme instances, though they are not strictly analogous, we may at least derive this truth, that even in this practical nineteenth century patriotism and nationality have to be considered and respected.

I almost hear the question: "*Cui bono?*" We may be obliged to take this sentiment into consideration, but surely we were better without it. The English race is one of the noblest and most powerful, if not the noblest and most powerful in the world. Suppose England had effaced your race, as the ancient Picts were effaced, and colonised the country with her own people, would Scotland have lost much, or the world in general?"

To which I reply, that not merely Scotland, but England and the world would have lost much. The noblest race, indeed, is a generous mixture of great races. Just as the Saxon, the Celt, the Dane, and the Norman blend in the Englishman of to-day, so the Moor, the Goth, and the Jew helped to make up that dominant type, the Spaniard of the sixteenth century. In the same way we may hold, without disparagement to the Englishman, that this island is the better for containing Englishmen and Scotsmen; that there is more variety, more depth, more stimulus, and more comparison. Have not, for instance, the educational successes of Scotland done much to stimulate educational enthusiasm in England? While the lighter graces are denied to us, is there not a dour depth in Scottish character which the Southron may study with advantage? Would the fascination of visiting Scotland be as great if it were colonised with the inhabitants of Surrey and Middlesex? Was England any the worse for those bonny Highland regiments that sprang the first into the trenches of Tel-el-Kebir? Is it not possible that while what remnant of the Scots that escaped would have ceased to be Scotsmen, they might have made but indifferent Englishmen? Would Bloomfield have been a sufficient substitute for Burns? Would Scott have been a wizard in the South? This may be a sentimental view, and far below the cognizance of the philosopher; but sentiment has its power, and, like other gases, it requires cautious dealing.

However, I acknowledge that, in a country like this, the patriotism of everyday life must have a practical basis as well as its sentimental colouring. It must supply a want; it must have a reason of existence; nay, it must have outward symbols to cling to. If it has not these, it is a mere hysterical platitude.

But I contend that there is a very broad principle, and a principle of the highest importance, in the preservation of a national character in a country like this. I used just now the expression "self-sufficing," and I used it deliberately. A country like ours has reached a stage of development when government is really but a small matter

compared with national character, and it is the respect for, and assertion of, national character that constitutes patriotism. Up to a certain point nations are apt to be largely influenced by their Governments, but after a certain point Governments are the mere outcome, the mere casual emanations, of the nation itself. The nation has the Government under its control; the Government is its servant, not its master; its destinies are shaped by causes independent of Government. A race that has long possessed its freedom and its free institutions wears them like easy clothes; they are indispensable, they allow the frame to act and the mind to work without hindrance, but they do not influence the operations of either. Take the history of a century or half a century in this country, and what may seem a paradox becomes at once a truism. In a century or half a century important changes take place in a country. You gaze on the face of a century as you gaze on the face of a region; you see great works and transformations, but it does not occur to you to ask who were the ministers by whom they were executed. These are the results, and that satisfies the mind; it is left to the professional historian to examine the details. But, indeed, how are the operations effected? By Government, sometimes, but that is only their last stage. The thinker produces the idea, and casts it into the common good; it often long lies lost; presently some one lights upon it, and it reappears; perhaps it may then vanish again, and yet again, till at last it is produced at an opportune moment, and becomes the inspiration of the country. How many old spinsters of ideas have we suddenly seen developed into queenly brides! I will not, of course, allude to political changes, though the same remark applies to them. Nor will I take such an example as our railway system, though that is a strong instance; nor our telegraphic system, though that is perhaps even stronger, as the State stepped in when that was an accomplished fact, and purchased it. But take the general improvement in the dwellings of our labouring classes. That in the country has been caused by the progress of enlightened ideas within the nation.

In the towns it has been largely caused by the gift and initiative of Mr. Peabody; and when his scheme had been working for some time, Government took it up and gave legislative assistance. Take another movement which has passed all over England, and has raised enormous sums from unimpressible people, and without the stimulus of any special enthusiasm: I mean that for the restoration of churches, which was set on foot just half a century ago by a handful of enthusiasts. Probably nothing would impress an English Rip van Winkle more than this transformation, which has never even had any point of contact with the Government. Education, which is now considered almost as much a necessity as air and water, owes its present regulation no doubt to Government; but it would have lapsed in Scotland had it not been for the people, and it was only taken up in England long after it had been urged and publicly exemplified by individuals.

But take the case of Scotland. I see that it is calculated that after the Union Scotland contributed only  $2\frac{1}{4}$  per cent of the Imperial revenue, while in 1866 it contributed  $14\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, and that during the same period, while the revenue of England increased 800 per cent, the revenue of Scotland increased 2500 per cent. Was that owing to Government? Certainly not. During four-fifths of that time there was but little government in Scotland, and that little as bad as it well could be. The material progress of the country was owing to certain qualities in the Scottish race, which, on the lowest ground, I think these figures show that it would be a pity to let die. But I am content to put that aside for a moment, and I simply take it as an illustration of the fact that the material progress of a country is not necessarily dependent on government.

I hold then that the changes that affect the mass of the nation proceed from the nation itself, that the well-being of a free nation depends upon itself. I believe that at this moment the people of Great Britain are better, happier, and more prosperous than their European neighbours, and this mainly because their long enjoyment of self-government has enabled them to know what they want,

and to obtain it. With a start of centuries they ought long to be enabled to preserve their pre-eminence. It will be their own fault if they do not. With them the hand and the eye, as with consummate marksmen, are accustomed to act together. They are not precipitate in making up their minds. They allow every influence to operate. They suffer the picture of a possible future to be tested by practical experience and coloured by past tradition: they place it in every light before they allow it to inspire their conduct or to affect their destiny. They are willing to receive and consider all ideas; some they entertain, some they pass over with polite indifference; of some they adjourn the consideration; those that they accept they lose no time in adopting.

If this is so in England the case of Scotland is even stronger. Scotland has been accustomed to be left much to herself. Till Scott brought Scotland into fashion, the country was little known and less liked; and unless a Porteous riot or a young Pretender troubled the political atmosphere, England was only too glad to leave Scotland to herself. And it was well for Scotland that it was so. She attained her majority when other countries are still in their political teens. When others needed support and guidance she stood alone. And in the future she should find the value of this.

For in a country that is self-sufficing, that governs itself, every element of national life is of importance, not merely because the vitality and the character of a race are intimately connected, but because every part of the country requires to be self-reliant. Every part of the country requires to study and formulate its own wants and its own ideas before it can hope to get a hearing for them. Nay, every part of the country will have, it is easy to see, to be left more and more to its own methods and its own devices, for it is impossible that any central Atlas can be found to bear the burden.

I remember that five years ago there were some figures published which were a waking nightmare. Mr. Hawksley then calculated that, taking a generation to be 42 years,



and starting from the present population, at the end of the first generation the population of England and Wales alone would be 44,808,000; at the end of the second, 83,656,000; at the end of the third, 156,000,000; at the end of the fourth, 291,000,000; at the end of the fifth, 544,000,000. What will happen two centuries hence, when the population will have reached that figure, we may safely leave to our five hundred millions of descendants. But the growth of the population, vast as it is, means this at the present time; that it is well for the different divisions of the empire to be able to take a little care of themselves, and not to hope for too much from the powers of beneficence in London.

Well then, my contention comes briefly to this, that it is good for the empire that we should preserve our nationality, and that, as regards ourselves, we should find a use for it. I pass by many kindred topics, such as the great value of the Scottish character as a colonising agency, because I fear to weary you, and because I wish to keep within the boundaries of Scotland. But how, for the purposes I have indicated, is this nationality to be preserved and utilised? It is not evidently mere peculiarities of accent and costume which are meant. It is not by a barren attachment to barren traditions; it is not by insulating the country. I have no time, indeed, to dwell minutely on so great a subject, but if I might offer the suggestion of what I mean, it would be, internally by development and externally by emulation. As regards those who are not our fellow-countrymen, let us endeavour to prove ourselves ahead of them; as regards ourselves, let us endeavour so to raise the standard of our institutions and our people that they may be the envy of mankind. I see no Utopian hope in this; I see nothing political; I see nothing in which the truest patriotism might not stimulate every individual of this nation in his own degree and sphere to engage. I see a work in which all might co-operate, an edifice where all might build or help the builders. Let the Scottish ploughman make it clear that he is better than the ploughman of other countries; the

Scottish milkmaid prove that she is a better milkmaid; the Scottish housewife neater than other housewives; the labour of the day-labourer more valuable than that of other day-labourers; the fisherman and mechanic more expert than other fishermen and mechanics: and all these will be engaged in a work which will raise their country and will find an immediate reward.

If I take these humbler and manual avocations, it is to strengthen my argument. It is not apparent, at first sight, how an ordinary labourer can raise the reputation of his country. But it is none the less true, and I will give you an instance. Scotland seems to supply the world with gardeners. Now I venture to say that this fact raises the reputation of Scotland. I further think that the association of Scotland with that gentle and beautiful calling has done much to lessen the prejudice against our country. I think the engineers of great steamboats are usually Scots. I speak with apprehension and under correction, and therefore do not emphasise this statement, though I believe it to be a fact. But if gardeners and engineers can raise the reputation of Scotland, how much more, as we get higher in the scale of education and opportunity, may we expect to find Scotsmen adorning the name of their country. What will your chances be? I am not going to name to you the roll of famous Scottish divines, and statesmen, and lawyers, and physicians, who have been reared here like yourselves: the roll is long and time is limited. But I may at least say this: that your chances of making your country proud of you, and mankind proud of your country, are a thousand-fold greater than those of the classes I have mentioned. Your truest patriotism, the truest of every Scotsman, is to be capable and reliable; wherever a Scotsman goes he is taken as the sample of his race: the best service, then, that he can do to his race is to approve himself a meritorious sample, and his merit will enhance the reputation of the stock. This is not the mere thesis, Be good and you will be happy. It is supplying another and a common stimulus to the energies of a nation which sometimes seems passionately to desire a means by which

it can show its patriotism and its mindfulness of past achievement.

We cannot omit, in considering the practical and practicable outlets for patriotism, the expenditure of money. I need not speak of this in a generation which has seen the Baxters and the Bairds, the Coatses and the Carnegies, and not least my noble friend, your latest doctor, the Marquis of Bute. Great sums have been given and bequeathed for educational purposes, although the flood of private munificence to our universities might perhaps have been even larger but for the fact of Government subsidies. But still as regards the patriotic bestowal of money, Scotland holds her own, and will, I doubt not, continue to hold her own. As an example of this and of the internal development, and of the righteous emulation which I advocate, there is the Royal Infirmary, the best equipped in the world, which now adorns this city. Scotland here leads the way: her success will incite other countries to build larger and better infirmaries, so that by this great work she will have benefited herself and society as well. Paisley receives almost annual benefactions from the princely family of Coats. Dunfermline has been adorned, I had almost said revived, by the affectionate bounty of one of her sons. Dundee has recently received a University. Edinburgh has lately been adorned with a cathedral; Glasgow with a public library and a college hall. I take these instances at random, for there are similar cases of frequent occurrence. There is another patriotic method of spending money which I cannot omit in a seat of learning like this, and in which Scotsmen have also borne a distinguished part,—I mean by printing and illustrating documents and pieces bearing on the history or literature of their country. What with the book-printing clubs and the liberality of individuals, I suppose that few countries have a mass of national information and materials so fully set forth as Scotland. This may seem a minor matter, but, speaking in the strict nationalistic sense, it is not; for in this way you preserve your archives beyond the touch of time, and enrich the general treasure of human erudition.

But besides the gifts of private benefaction, Scotland has a noble inheritance, of which we are the trustees. For on three external bases we retain the ancient symbols and facts of independence. Our systems of Religion, of Law, and of Education are all essentially and outwardly different from those which prevail in England. The Church and the Law we kept strenuously and purposely (and when I speak of the Church I mean, of course, the Presbyterian Churches, whether established or not); the Universities remained not by special effort, but because of their fitness for the work. The Presbyterian system and our scheme of jurisprudence would continue to exist even if they were much less efficient than they are, because of what I may call the historical conservatism of the Scottish people; the Universities will continue, not merely because of their present powers and usefulness, but because of their constant readiness to adapt themselves to the shifting conditions of human requirement and intellectual effort.

I plead then that over these three distinctive systems we should watch with peculiar care, with such constant anxiety both to preserve and to improve, both to maintain the spirit while accepting the suggestions of the teeming age, that those outside our boundaries shall recognise that it is their excellences and the sedulous anxiety with which every opportunity is taken of still further improving them, that divides them from other such systems,—not mere peculiarities and catchwords of form.

Not that the people of Scotland have shown a blind love of form, even as regards these cherished institutions. Alterations are constantly made and demanded in the law; the Courts have been the subject of constant modification; changes have been effected in the ecclesiastical bodies; the efficiency of the Universities is a subject of constant and vigilant scrutiny; but there is no complaint so long as essentials are left untouched. When Norman Macleod went to visit an old woman who was both a Covenanter and a parishioner, she at once offered him the end of her ear-trumpet, and shouted, "Gang ower the fundamentals!" and we may be certain that it would be perilous for any

statesman who was dealing with Scotland to tamper with the fundamentals.

I spoke a moment ago of the historical conservatism of the Scottish people. Nowhere is that historical sentiment in its best and highest sense so strong. It is that which has preserved Scottish nationality, and it is that which will preserve those institutions in Scotland which are worth preserving. Nay, it is the practical determination to keep what it sees clearly is worth keeping, and to sweep away what is not worth keeping; its keen insight into what is valuable and essential, and its indifference to form and pretension, which not merely have preserved the Scottish character, but are the Scottish character. There was, it is true, a shriek of dismay from Scotland when she saw her Parliament disappear, and her delegates proceed southwards to London. But a moment's reflection convinced her that the Parliament had not been so efficient as to demand many tears, or to preclude the possibility of imagining a better on the banks of the Thames. Year by year during the last century she saw Edinburgh becoming less and less and London more and more of a capital. In many countries it would have produced assimilation or obliteration. In Scotland it produced nothing of the sort. She had preserved her fundamentals. She retained her Church, her Law, and her Teaching. Besides these she had her traditions, and the fierce energy required to fight soil, and climate, and poverty. She thus retained the resources and guarantees of her national character.

I maintain, then, that both in its shrewd and in its sentimental aspects the Scottish character is well fitted to deal with its institutions, and to perfect them and itself. I have indicated that that is, in my humble opinion, the true direction for what is called patriotism in this nineteenth century. We must all, I contend, bear this in mind; it should be part of our mental training; it should inspire our Universities and all the influences that breathe on our youth. It should become a factor in the national life, and it should guide the enthusiasm which history evokes and meditation inflames.

But I hear you ask, Why address this series of hints to us? I speak them to you, although they may not seem proper to the occasion or the audience of a University discourse, because I contend that they are not merely pertinent but vital to the present audience. I speak them, too, knowing that you are by no means all Scots; but advisedly as to those who should understand, and explain elsewhere, why we cling to our nationality, and who will, I hope, bear westwards and southwards that second and higher Scottish nature of adoption which Brougham, and Horner, and Lansdowne, and Russell took from their education here. Moreover, with this University and this city of ours you will always have a sacred link. You "will drag at each remove a lengthening," but not, I trust, a painful chain, of which one end will be fixed in Edinburgh. Let me illustrate what I mean. In the last century a Scottish adventurer, called Dow, ran away to the East Indies, and took service and rose to high command under the Great Mogul. One day he was narrating how, when he had charge of that potentate, with two regiments under his command, at Delhi, he was tempted to dethrone the monarch and reign in his stead. Dr. Carlyle—Jupiter Carlyle—asked him what prevented him from yielding to that temptation; and he gave this memorable answer, that it was reflecting on what his old schoolfellows at Dunbar would think of him for being guilty of such an action. And so I venture to predict that, long after you have quitted this University, its associations will hold and control you, and that you will often be spurred to good, and restrained from evil, by the thoughts of what your old classmates in Edinburgh would think of you. These matters, therefore, cannot be indifferent to any of you; but to the Scotsmen in this hall they are vital, because on them, in the coming generation, it depends to preserve Scottish tradition and maintain Scottish character. Much of that character has been taken away from us by the swift amalgamating power of railways, by the centralisation of Anglicising empire, by the compassionate sneer of the higher civilisation. The present generation will not

easily discover the ancient Scottish judge of manifold antics, and I must add bottles, the patriarchal chieftain supreme and sacred on his lonely hills, the candid servant, or rather the tart coadjutor, of the parish minister; we can no longer recognise the condition of society described in Miss Ferrier's novels and *St. Ronan's Well*. The next generation may believe Dean Ramsay to have been an ecclesiastical Joe Miller, or the Dean of Edinburgh that promulgated Laud's Prayer-Book. The present state of things soon passes into tradition, facts become fictions, the real and the unreal become blended in the haze of a decade. Much is passing away, much more must pass away; and it is well. Your old draperies, your old tapestries, your old banners, are clutched by the greedy century, and carded and thrown into the mill, that they may emerge damp sheets for your newspapers; and it is well. Your old bones are pulverised that they may dress the pastures; and it is well. Your abbeys and your castles are quarries for dykes, and prize bothies, and locomotive sheds; and it is well. Your archives cover preserves, your ancestral trees pave roads, you sound for coal under your old tower, and it tumbles about your ears, your clan emigrates to Glasgow or to Canada, the glen is silent save for the footfall of the deer; and it is well. You scale the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn, and you find a personally conducted tourist drinking bottled beer on the summit; and it is well also. The effigies and splendours of tradition are not meant to cramp the energies or the development of a vigorous and various nation. They are not meant to hold in mortmain the proper territory of human intelligence and righteous aspiration. They live and teach their lessons in our annals, they have their own worshippers and their own shrines, but the earth is not theirs nor the fulness thereof. For all that, however, these very annals, and the characters they inspire and describe, are our intangible property; they constitute an inheritance we are not willing to see either squandered or demolished, for they are the title-deeds and heirlooms of our national existence.

And so, gentlemen, I have ventured to consider with you to-day some of the tendencies and some of the limitations of what is called patriotism. In Scotland I think that spirit rather requires direction than sustenance. What we need is not the passive recollection of the past, though the past should never be forgotten; it is not the mere utterance of time-honoured shibboleths, though we need not disdain these either; it is not the constituting the plaid a wedding garment without which none is welcome, though we may love the tartan well enough;—it was not thus that Scotland was made, nor is it thus that she can be maintained. The spirit that I will not say we need—for it exists, but the spirit that we wish to see developed is an intelligent pride in this country of ours, and an anxiety to make it in one way or another, by every means in our power, more and more worthy of our pride. Let us win in the competition of international well-being and prosperity. Let us have a finer, better educated, better lodged, and better nourished race than exists elsewhere; better schools, better universities, better tribunals, ay, and better churches. In one phrase, let our standard be higher, not in the jargon of the Education Department, but in the acknowledgment of mankind. The standard of mankind is not so exalted but that a nobler can be imagined and attained. The dream of him who loved Scotland best would lie not so much in the direction of antiquarian revival as in the hope that his country might be pointed out as one that in spite of rocks, and rigour, and poverty, could yet teach the world by precept and example, could lead the van and point the moral, where greater nations and fairer states had failed. Those who believe the Scots to be so eminently vain a race will say that already we are in our opinion the tenth legion of civilisation. Well, vanity is a centipede with corns on every foot: I will not tread where the ground is so dangerous. But if we are not foremost we may at any rate become so. Our fathers have declared unto us what was done in their days and in the old time before them: we know that we come of a strenuous stock. Do you



remember the words that young Carlyle wrote to his brother nine years after he had left this University as a student, forty-three years before he returned as its Rector?—

“I say, Jack, thou and I must never falter. Work, my boy, work unweariedly. I swear that all the thousand miseries of this hard fight, and ill-health, the most terrific of them all, shall never chain us down. By the river Styx, it shall not! Two fellows from a nameless spot in Annandale shall yet show the world the pluck that is in Carlyles.”

Let that be your spirit to-day. You are citizens of no mean city, members of no common state, heirs of no supine empire. You will many of you exercise influence over your fellow-men: some will study and interpret our laws, and so become a power; others again will be in a position to solace and exalt, as destined to be doctors and clergymen, and so the physical and spiritual comforters of mankind. Make the best of these opportunities. Raise your country, raise your University, raise yourselves. Your light, if you show it forth, will not merely illustrate yourselves, but be reflected here. We, your elders, then, have at any rate a personal interest in observing your career: they, your teachers around me, I, your transient head, may well look forth with anxiety to see if the great wave of learned life that will roll from these walls into the world is to be an influence for good, or an influence for evil, or feebly dwindle into a stagnant puddle; we watch its curling crest without knowing where it will break or what it will affect; we can but mutely hope that it will neither wreck nor strand the vessel of the State, but help to bear it safely on. The words of a moment or a speaker like the present can neither bear a lesson nor bequeath a memory. Were it otherwise, I should simply pray you to love your country; to add this one ennobling motive to those other dead and living influences of the past, the present, and the future, which urge you on in the path of duty, which sustain you in the hour of trial, in the day of difficulty, in the very valley of the shadow of death.

Iddesleigh (1. earl), Stafford Henry Northcote.

**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE**

**SIR STAFFORD HENRY NORTHCOTE, BART.**

**(AFTERWARDS FIRST EARL OF IDDESLEIGH)**

**G.C.B., D.C.L., ETC.**

**LORD RECTOR**

**JAN. 30, 1884**



THE honour you have done me by electing me to the office of your Rector is one of which any man may feel proud; but while it commands my warmest gratitude, I can assure you that I feel no ordinary difficulty in making a suitable acknowledgment of it. In any circumstances I should feel myself unequal to the task, but there are peculiarities in my present position which render that task greater, or my ability to accomplish it less, than is commonly the case with a newly-elected officer. This is not an ordinary year. You are about to celebrate the tercentenary of your University, and you may well expect that my address should be framed in a spirit worthy of such an occasion; while I am sure you will all desire that there should be no jarring notes, no echoes of party controversy to disturb the harmony which of right should characterise a birthday festival. For myself, I may at once assure you that while I cannot forget my obligations to the friends who conceived the idea of proposing me for this high office, and who worked so hard to secure my election, I merge all other thoughts in the ruling desire to show myself neither unworthy of nor ungrateful for the kindness of all sections among you, and that it will be my pleasure, as well as my duty, to place my poor services at the disposal of the University as a whole, and of its members generally, without distinction between Trojans and Tyrians.

But it is not enough to bespeak your candid reception of what I may say on the present occasion. I must go further, and ask for your very much needed indulgence. If Lord Bacon was fain to appeal to the University of

Cambridge "not to require from a man full of occupations anything of deep research or the wondrous effects and prerogatives of leisure," I, too, may make to you at least an equal apology for the shortcomings which you will discover in the remarks of one who is within a few days of plunging into the exhausting conflicts of the House of Commons, and to whom a short excursion which he will be able to make into the quiet and happy regions of literature and science will be but like the Soldier's Dream of your Scottish poet, charming while it lasts, but sure to be speedily broken off by the war-bugle of the morning. If, however, it is beyond my own power to offer you a worthy commemoration of the conclusion of the third century of your existence, I have the consolation of reflecting that such an offering has already been made to you by one far better fitted for the task in the excellent and interesting story of the University which you owe to your Principal, Sir Alexander Grant.

May I be allowed for one moment to interrupt myself for the purpose of expressing my great personal pleasure at finding myself once more brought into official relations with that distinguished gentleman, whom long since I knew when I was connected with the Government of India, and for whom I then conceived the highest respect and regard, which, I feel sure, our future intercourse will in no degree tend to diminish?

From the story which your Principal has told us there is much to be learned which is eminently suggestive. He has not confined himself to the compilation of a mass of facts, nor presented us with mere annals and records. He has, as it were, given life to the University, and has written its biography as you might write the biography of an individual. In the best sense of the word he has observed the unities, and has kept his hero continually on the stage before us, so that we are able not only to trace but to understand and realise the meaning of his growth. And this is of peculiar importance, because your University has differed from most others, and certainly from the other Universities of Scotland, not only in the circumstances by

which it has been surrounded, but by the very law of its growth. It has differed from them, if I may use such an expression, as synthesis differs from analysis.

Commonly the Universities of the Middle Ages were founded by popes and emperors upon a comprehensive plan. They were to embrace almost every kind of knowledge. Alouin, the friend of Charlemagne, who is regarded as a sort of parent of Universities, was for teaching *omne scibile*—everything that was to be known; and, generally speaking, such was the scope of these institutions. Of collegiate life, in the first instance, they had no tinge: the university came first, the college afterwards. Thus, St. Andrews was founded in 1411, but its first college, and that was rather of a theological than of a scholastic character, not till 1456; Glasgow in 1450, but with very partial success at first owing to the want of collegiate endowments; and Aberdeen in 1494, its first college ten years afterwards in 1505. In these cases privileges were in the first place granted to the universities, but without endowments, and it was not until the endowments were added, generally in the form of collegiate foundations, that the universities began to thrive.

But in Edinburgh the process was reversed. The College, we are told, came first, and it was only by gradual stages that it developed into a University. First one faculty and then another obtained recognition. Sometimes regents were turned into professors; sometimes new branches of study were added to the old; sometimes the Town Council acted the part of wise and munificent patrons; sometimes they interfered, as it would seem, unnecessarily and injudiciously. Under all circumstances, the College was growing and approximating more and more to the regular University type. It was a natural development, and being natural, it was vigorous and irrepressible. You may read the story in your Principal's volumes, and it cannot fail to interest you.

It was about a century after its foundation that it began to put forth that remarkable branch, its Medical School, which now more than any other attracts the attention and commands the respect of the world. From that time its

character was determined, and its position among the great educational institutions of the country was ascertained. It has not been shaped to fit a place ready prepared for it; it has grown by its own internal vigour, and as it grew it has made a place to fit its advancing requirements. Let us hope that it will still continue to grow. It is hardly satisfactory that it should still be without a proper hall for meetings such as this. It would be a worthy tercentenary present.

Such, gentlemen, appears to me to have been the history of the University as it is recorded for our instruction, and I think it is a history thoroughly illustrative of the character of the nation to which it belongs. Throughout the struggles of the three centuries which it has completed we see traces of the independence, shrewdness, and resolution, tempered by a consistent respect for law, which are among the distinguishing features of the Scotch people. Long may this record of their nationality continue to flourish, and long may your descendants keep alive the spirit which has produced such noble results!

I expressed a few minutes ago the hope that our meeting to-day might not be marred by any unseemly display of party spirit; but it was far from my intention to discourage the healthful expression of a genuine interest in political affairs, which, to my mind, is very much to be commended among the educated youth of a nation, and tends greatly to preserve the true spirit of our free institutions. Party spirit among the young men in our national seats of learning may easily be abused and may become mischievous, as is the case with all good things; and unquestionably there is a kind of party spirit—that which refuses to do justice to opponents or to see any merits except on its own side—which is much to be deprecated and discouraged. But I confess that I value so highly the training of our youth for political life, that I would rather see among you a little exaggeration, and even a little temporary misdirection of your partisanship, than a dull indifference upon questions of high importance, or a selfish insensibility to the interests of your native country.

You all remember the beautiful and touching words of the Greek orator and statesman : "The taking of the youth out of a State is like taking the spring out of the year." They were words which he applied to the loss sustained by the State in the premature death of those who were cut off by war or disease. But they might with equal truth and force be applied to the loss which it suffers when the flower of its youth withdraw themselves from active political life to devote the energies which should be employed for their country's benefit to selfish objects, or to allow them to become enervated by indolence or luxury.

It may be reckoned among the greatest advantages of University life and of the University course of education, as compared with isolated private training, that it calls forth and encourages this generous public spirit at an age when men are particularly open to noble influences, and under circumstances which afford them peculiar advantages for prosecuting those studies which lie at the foundation of a sound political education. The time has been when the great value of the University was that it preserved the records of learning, and afforded to its students the leisure as well as the means of cultivating the arts and sciences undisturbed by the troubles of the world without.

They comprised, as we are told, foundations and buildings, endowments with revenues, endowments with franchises and privileges, institutions and ordinances for government, all tending to quietness and privateness of life and discharge of cares and troubles, much like the stations which Virgil prescribed for the hiving of bees—

*Principio sedes apibus statioque petenda,  
Quo neque sit ventis aditus (nam pabula venti  
Ferre domum prohibent), neque oves haedique petulci  
Floribus insultent, aut errans bucula campo  
Decutiat rorem, et surgentes atterat herbas.*

This was the office which the University fulfilled, and I believe that it was one, at least, of the special functions of a Lord Rector to see that the students were secured in the enjoyment of that literary leisure which was so essential to the prosecution of their labours and to the preservation of



the records of learning themselves from the stormy gusts of the outside world, and from the trampling of armed marauders, worse foes than the Mantuan sheep and goats and heifers.

But at the present day we have something more than this to look for. The student of the Middle Ages might, perhaps with justice, confine himself to the acquisition of knowledge within the walls of his college, and might, without blame, look forth upon the storms of the outer world in the spirit of the Epicurean Lucretius. But with us the object of the University is not merely to protect scholars but to form citizens; and our sons should be encouraged to look on the sight of the great vessel of the State labouring among the turbulent waves and the whitening breakers, not with indolent indifference, nor with tame self-gratulation over the ease and safety of their own position, but with noble sympathy and with a generous longing for the time when they too may take part in the toils and in the perils of the voyage.

I have said that the University age is one which has some special advantages for the study of political life. I am aware that I may be met by a quotation from a very high authority, made by an authority even superior to the first in matters involving knowledge of human nature. Shakespeare, quoting Aristotle, carries imposing weight; and perhaps you will recall the sentence which he puts into the mouth of his Hector—

Paris and Troilus, you have both said well;  
And on the cause and question now in hand  
Have glozed,—but superficially; not much  
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought  
Unfit to hear moral philosophy.

When, I say, you recall that depreciatory opinion, and when you find that it is of political rather than of moral philosophy that Aristotle speaks in the passage to which I presume that Shakespeare refers—*Διὸ τῆς πολιτείας οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκείος ἀκροατῆς ὁ νέος*—you may be excused for doubting whether such philosophy is not thereby placed beyond and outside of your proper ken. But I believe that a closer

examination of the great master's teaching will throw a different light upon the matter. What he tells us is, that the young man is not a suitable hearer of political philosophy, because it is a matter which is concerned with the affairs of life, and he has no experience of them, and because he is unfit to judge of rules of conduct, inasmuch as he is apt to be blinded by his passions. But he goes on to say that in these respects there is no difference between him who is young in years and him who is young in character, and that the defect is not in the age but in the principles of his life. And if that be true, does it not point to the conclusion that, instead of the study of political philosophy being unfit for the young man, it is rather that the young man should study it while his character is still in process of formation, so that he may not in after-life be exposed to the reproach that though a man in age he is still by habit and character no more than a boy?

You will, I am sure, pardon me if in this assembly I linger for yet a few minutes over the Aristotelian teaching, though I fear I shall be thought behind the age in taking you back to so antiquated a master. But when I reflect on the serious disadvantage to which the commonwealth would be subjected if the conduct of its affairs were left solely to those who take them up late in life, with none but contracted ideas derived from the experience of the pursuits of business, or perhaps with no ideas beyond those of luxury and self-indulgence, I cannot but revert to the considerations which should lead us to call upon our youth to improve their opportunities, and to fit themselves betimes to play a noble part in the service of their country. There is a chapter in Aristotle's *Treatise on Rhetoric*—the twelfth of the second book—in which he describes in terse and pointed language the moral character, the passions, the habits of the young, and conveys to them in a few words warnings and encouragements. It is followed by one which describes in a far less pleasing tone the same features as they are presented by the old; and by a third which, after the manner of the writer, assigns to those in the flower of their age all the happy attributes of the

golden mean. As he places that privileged portion of man's life between the ages of thirty and fifty, neither you nor I have a direct present interest in it; but to you, at all events, it presents itself in the light shed by the beneficent genius of Hope; and you may recall the lines in which your own poet, inspired, as it is said, by the sight of your classic Calton Hill, speaks of the bewitching influence of the future and of the charms of the distance that lends enchantment to the view.

But I revert to the chapter upon the young, and I will run rapidly through the description which Aristotle gives of them. They are, he tells us, ardent, changeable, and passionate. They desire honour; but they desire victory still more, for they have a craving for superiority, and victory is a kind of superiority. Anyhow, they desire both more than they do wealth. They are good-natured, credulous, hopeful, easily deceived, courageous, modest; and, what with Aristotle is the highest of all terms of praise, they are magnanimous. They choose to do the things that are beautiful rather than those which are advantageous. They are, above all, friendly; for their friendship is founded on feeling and not on interest. Their great fault is their aptitude to run into excess, to love in excess, to hate in excess, and generally to disregard that wise maxim of the sage Chilon, *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*. They think they know everything, and they are very positive in their assertions. If they commit injustice it is from wantonness, and not from malice. They are compassionate, for they generally think that the sufferings of men are undeserved. Finally, they are fond of laughter, for they are witty and lively; and he adds this remark, that liveliness (*εὐτραπεία*) is wantonness tamed by education. Can any one look on such a picture as this without feeling what a mass of valuable material is here contained; how easily it may be converted by good and proper management into a goodly edifice, a well-organised State; or, on the other hand, how by neglect or by unskilful treatment its excellences may be marred, its faults exaggerated, and its usefulness turned into harmfulness.

I said that at the University there were advantages for

the training of good citizens, not only in the respect of the age of the students, but also because you have here ready access to the sources of all the information we possess, and have the means of obtaining guidance to the best methods of turning that information to good account. There have been many who may be said to have been intellectually starved for want of those materials of knowledge which you so amply possess in your libraries and museums. There have been as many, or perhaps more, who have been starved in the very midst of that intellectual abundance for want of instruction such as you enjoy in the lectures and expositions of your professors, and in the scarcely less valuable play of mind afforded by your intercourse and your competitions with your fellow-students.

It is, of course, to those who are engaged in the actual work of teaching that the choice of the subject and methods of study must be mainly referred. Such desultory remarks as an outsider can make must be taken simply for what they are worth; and it will be well if they are even suggestive of useful ideas. But there may occasionally be some interest in the reflections of those who are advanced in life, and who turn back their minds and thoughts to the period of their own youth, and to the mixed good and evil of their own early years.

It is easy to depreciate the advantages of the old University classical course, and to describe the long years spent upon Greek and Latin grammar, and in prose and verse compositions as a melancholy waste of time. No doubt these studies were often carried somewhat to excess. No doubt there have been many young men, who, when they came to compete in the examination halls, or still more in the actual walks of life, with contemporaries prepared upon a different system, have felt an inferiority in practical and directly useful knowledge, which has placed them at a considerable disadvantage. But for all that, there is in the old learning a charm which carries us away from the bonds and fetters of the workaday world, refreshes us when we are weary, elevates us when our aims are sinking, cheers us when we are despondent, calms us when we are agitated,

moderates our minds and thoughts alike when we are in prosperity and in adversity, sets before us high examples of courage and patience and wisdom and unselfishness, and does us, too, the inestimable service of renewing in our own hearts the memories of our nobler, though probably less practical, selves—such as we were when we began to look eagerly forward to the race in which we had not yet engaged, and which we have since found so absorbing of our energies. It is when we turn back to the literature of our early years that we feel ourselves saying with the poet—

Though inland far we be  
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither ;  
Can in a moment travel thither,  
And see the children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Such occasional retrospects are, I think, both fascinating and beneficial, even though it be but seldom that a busy man has leisure for them. But, of course, we are not to pursue our studies when young merely that we may have something to meditate on when we are old, as one of our facetious newspaper heroes recommends his young friend to lay in a stock of port wine betimes, so that he may have something to drink in his decline of life. We do not expect or desire all that amount of foresight. It is to be wished that you should take an interest in your classics for your own sakes and for the sake of the works themselves ; that you should learn to appreciate the beauty of the language, the elevation of the sentiments, the quaintness and peculiarities of the style, and should discover for yourselves the lessons which they contain ; and which, though they may escape the eye of the careless reader, will reveal themselves richly to the loving student.

Perhaps I may here not inappropriately mention that I intend to give the twenty-five-guinea prize for an historical subject. I put your classical histories in a very high place. In a certain sense, of course, the more complete information which the modern historian possesses enables

him to tell you much that the original writer was ignorant of. But though Mr. Grote knew all that was written by Thucydides, and knew a good deal besides, and though his readings of ancient stories and ancient characters by the light of his modern experience give to his work a value peculiarly its own, yet we instinctively feel that the later history could never take the place of the earlier, and that, were we compelled to choose between the two, we should all be ready to sacrifice the more complete for the sake of the more characteristic.

It is with a history as it is with a picture—the interest lies not only in the subject of the composition, but in great part in the composer himself, whether he be writer or painter. One does not only desire to know the facts of the Peloponnesian War, one wants to know also the impression which that great struggle made upon the mind of a highly-gifted contemporary observer. Mr. Grote, reviewing all the motives and all the forces called into play by the light of subsequent events, may give a superior account of the war as it was in itself and in its consequences to Greece. But Thucydides gives you not so much what the war was as what it appeared to be in the eyes of those who took part in it.

Then, again, there is the workmanship of the piece, thrice admirable as a model of historical writing, and deserving, indeed, the high character which its author does not shrink from claiming for his *κτῆμα εἰς ἀεί*.

Contemporary history is, of course, open to many criticisms, and it is never well to rely on it, without the corroborative or qualifying evidence of more than a single writer; but there is something of life and spirit about it which no following author can ever reproduce. Its very faults excuse themselves. For the historian of a period far removed from his own time to be guilty of partiality is an offence which deserves little mercy. In the contemporary we not only pardon, but appreciate, a quality which gives so much more zest to his work.

\\ Consider, too, the little touches which a careful eye may from time to time discover. You are studying the history

of Alexander ; and, in accordance with the character which Aristotle gives young men, I may presume that you make a hero of one who was both φιλόκλεος and φιλόνικος. You ask yourself, what was the secret of that great monarch's wonderful success ? Was it due to accident, or to the inspiration of genius, or to steady work ? The biographers and historians will answer the question according to their lights ; but to my mind by far the most interesting answer is that given by Demosthenes, no lover of the Macedonian, as you well know, almost immediately after his death, when exhorting the Athenians to take advantage of that great opportunity. " For if any one," he says, " has supposed Alexander to be fortunate because things have always gone well with him, let him consider that his good fortune has come to him, acting, and labouring, and daring, and not sitting still. Now then," he continues, " he being dead, Fortune is seeking with whom she shall take up her abode ; and it is with you Athenians that she ought to do so."

We are sometimes asked by what standard we ought to try the actions and the merits of men of an age far remote from our own, and there are undoubtedly some cases in which it is difficult to give a simple answer to such a question. But I think you will agree with me in this—that when we can apply both the fixed and permanent standard of the laws of human nature, and the more occasional one of contemporary opinion, and can try a man by both, and arrive at the same result, we have not only acquired the means of estimating the character of a hero of the past, but also have learnt for ourselves a lesson of no small value to our own life.

How many desire to know the secret of success ! And where can you better seek for it than by studying the careers and the characters of those by whom conspicuous success has been achieved ? And where can you find a more striking example than Alexander ? Well, to some that great man appears in the light of a mere headstrong, violent barbarian conqueror, a sort of Genghis or Tamerlane, bearing down everything before him by sheer force, and destroying Greek liberty and Greek civilisation by the rude

hand of military despotism. But to the shrewd, piercing eye of the man who, more than any one in Greece or in the world, was concerned in truly estimating the foe with whom he was carrying on a life or death struggle—to the eye of Demosthenes—he was a man who attained success by the ordinary methods of human action, by steady work, by unwearied labour, and by unflinching courage. These were the methods by which he secured the good fortune which distinguished him, and they were methods which it was, in the judgment of the great orator, open to his countrymen to adopt, and which would gain for them the like distinction.

Gentlemen, this city of Edinburgh has acquired the name of the Modern Athens. It may have been through a mere fancied physical resemblance; but even a slight accident may serve to impart something of the *genius loci*, and it may well be that some among you are led by it to take especial delight in the history and fortunes of that famous State which has so many points of interest for the citizens of our island empire.

Some years ago an honoured Englishman, speaking of ancient and modern literature, was betrayed into the careless observation that there was more to be learned from the *Times* newspaper than from all the works of Thucydides. Of course, we must take such an expression in the sense in which the speaker, no doubt, intended it to be understood—with reference to the information required for the transaction of daily life. In such a sense it may have been true, just as it might be true that there was more useful information to be got out a cookery book than out of all the writings of Adam Smith. But it must be unnecessary for me, in speaking to such an assembly as this, to take up time in pointing out the shallowness of the observation. Athens, of a part of whose political life Thucydides tells the story, must ever be an object of the highest interest to every political student, because in what has come down to us of her history and of her literature, we have so complete and so minute a picture of all the features of her public life. Not only historians and biographers, but the philosophers,



the orators, the poets, have combined to analyse the springs of her actions and to reveal her to us as she really was. And there was that in the Athenian character that made such a revelation the easier; for with all their faults—and they were many—they were a people deserving the praise which Pericles bestowed on them when he said: “Our social march is free, not only in regard to public affairs, but also in regard to intolerance of each other’s diversity of daily pursuits. For we are not angry with our neighbour for what he may do to please himself; nor do we ever put on those sour looks which, though they do no positive damage, are not the less sure to offend.” We shall not do amiss in taking especial notice of those last words. It is indeed a great blessing when a people can be earnest and hearty in their own pursuits without being sour with regard to those of others, and when they can turn off an acrid controversy with a good-humoured repartee.

The Athenian stage furnished an inimitable method of mixing politics with amusement, and of giving men the opportunity of expressing their own views and of criticising those of their opponents in the spirit which leads Horace to ask, “What hinders us from laughing and telling the truth at the same time?” It was once said of the old French monarchy that it was a despotism tempered by epigrams. It might be said of the best period of Athenian history that it was a democracy tempered by comedies. And what comedies they are!

It is not easy to convey to you young men any adequate idea of the delight with which, when one is wearied with the long sittings in the House of Commons, one takes up the *Knights* or the *Clouds*; and then there is the more serious tragic poetry which, while it tells the tale of Grecian thought and breathes the spirit of the Grecian muse, opens to us from time to time the depths of the universal poetry of mankind, and startles us at moments with its religious, its almost Christian sentiments.

When we listen to the noble pleading of Antigone, her piety towards her brother, her resolution to obey the higher law of God rather than the law which condemns her

to die for the discharge of a sister's duty, and her somewhat haughty refusal to allow her younger sister to involve herself in her fate, we feel as if we had before us one who might fitly take rank with Shakespeare's Isabella, nay, whom I would not hesitate to place above her for dignity and greatness of character, even though there are wanting in the older play those more distinctly Christian touches, like the celebrated passage, that "All the souls that are were forfeit once," which give to *Measure for Measure* its chief flavour of superiority. But it is not so much to the sentiments, or the characters, or the structure of the play itself, that I wish to direct your attention, as to the warmth with which the Athenians received and the nicety of discrimination with which they appreciated this and the many other great pieces which from year to year were placed before them by the mighty masters of the drama. It throws no small light upon the national character when we hear of the keen zest with which they threw themselves into the annual competition for the dramatic prize, or when we read such a story as that of the aged Sophocles confounding those relatives who would have had him declared imbecile, and incapable of managing his own affairs, by reciting before the judges his newly-written chorus from the *Œdipus of Colonus* as a sufficient answer to the unworthy imputation.

But I must not linger among the Athenians, nor confine my remarks to purely classical studies. There are others which deserve attention, and which will, perhaps, appear even more interesting to a good many of my hearers. I will not invite you to wander among the flowery paths of literature, nor touch at all upon some of its pleasantest and fairest fields. A very few words I will venture to say upon the subject of modern languages, for the adequate study of which I earnestly plead. So far as these languages are ancillary to the classical studies of which we have been speaking, I need say very little. They help us more perfectly to comprehend, to enjoy, and to profit by the Greek and Latin authors; and in their turn it is from a knowledge of the Greek and Latin authors that we derive the

power of rightly appreciating the moderns. How much we should lose of the pleasure and advantage with which we read the poetry of our own land and of other countries if we had not at hand, or in our minds, the poetry of early ages from which it has been so largely borrowed, or by which, at all events, it has been so largely inspired!

And, on the other hand, what lessons we learn of the dignity and the depth which Christianity has added to poetry when we compare the Christian with the heathen conceptions! Compare the *Inferno* of Dante with the Homeric and the Virgilian descents into the world of shadows; or, to take a softer theme, the *Lycidas* of Milton with the *Thyrsis* of Theocritus. I would indicate this method of comparison as one well worthy your pursuit. And, as I am rather talking to you in a friendly and desultory way than offering you anything in the nature of a formal lecture, I shall make no excuse for turning aside to call your especial attention to the grand morality of the poet to whom of all I am disposed to give the palm, the poet Dante—a man whose life was largely spent in the excitement of civil strife, and who certainly was not deficient in zealous party spirit, yet the most conspicuous characteristic of whose poetry was his inflexible love of justice. His greatest political and personal friends do not escape the stern verdicts which they may deserve for their moral vices, and his most active enemies and persecutors are to be found in happier regions if they are men of purer and more virtuous lives. And yet he is the man who passes upon the lukewarm and the indifferent that stinging sentence: "Let us not speak of them, but look at them and pass on."

But these are not the only reflections which I had to make on the study of modern languages. I address myself now, not to the students of literature, but to those who are destined for the walks of science, and on them I would urge the great importance of acquainting themselves with those languages in which the labours of other workers in the same fields as themselves are recorded. As when you go for the first time into a foreign country, you feel how imperfectly you appreciate and understand it if you cannot

speak the language of the inhabitants, and that no guide-books and no interpreters are capable of supplying the defect, so, when you are entering upon any field of human inquiry, you feel yourself hampered and crippled if you cannot readily and at your own will make yourselves masters of any foreign works bearing upon the subject in which you are interested.

And now, what am I to say to you on matters of science? There are two points which it occurs to me more especially to urge. One is the national interest in the progress of science, the other the spirit in which it is desirable that science should be studied, and the advantages which the Universities present for its cultivation. When we speak of the advantages which the nation is to derive from the promotion of science, one of the first which is commonly present to our minds is that our producers and manufacturers, who are in various ways handicapped in the race with other nations, will largely benefit by the advance of knowledge, which will enable them to produce or to manufacture better and more economically.

In order to promote science of this class, what is chiefly necessary is that we should awaken in the minds of our producers an appreciation of and a demand for improvements, which must be the result of a certain amount of scientific education among themselves, leading them to believe in new and more excellent ways than those which they have been accustomed to, and at the same time opening their eyes so far as to enable them to discern a little between practicable and impracticable suggestions, and to be neither too credulous nor too unbelieving. Such an amount of education in the principles of science as will produce these results will be good for all who are preparing themselves for the ordinary walks in life.

But there is a higher pitch for those to aim at who wish to devote themselves to the discovery of principles, and to their application to the subject-matter to which they belong. It is to these men that society has reason to be grateful, yet to them rewards, and even acknowledgments, come sparingly and capriciously; so that we are continually

reminded of the passage in Scripture which tells us of the poor wise man who by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no man remembered that same poor man. Now, it is not amiss to consider what support and comfort men like these, public benefactors as they are, even though they be unacknowledged, derive from the University system. I do not refer to fellowships and bursaries and other emoluments, but rather to the associations of *Alma Mater*, the means she affords of prosecuting study, and (most valuable of all) the sympathy and encouragement which the student will find within her walls, but which he could not have found beyond them. For in the world there are few who can appreciate the pursuit of pure science, abstract science, which does not directly bear upon the business of life; and it is much to know and feel that we are working in the midst of those who do not look upon us as idle dreamers or mischievous meddlers with the secrets of nature; but who can understand us, discuss with us, encourage us, and on occasions warn or arrest us when we are deviating from the right way. For the student in science is exposed to two opposite dangers—that of being discouraged for want of sympathy, and through the ignorance and prejudices of those among whom he lives; and that of being led away by his solitary studies into extravagance, conceit, and wild error. Such was the case, no doubt, with our mediæval philosophers, the men of whom Roger Bacon was, I suppose, by far the greatest. Discerning more of the realities of the physical world than their contemporaries, but failing to obtain any intelligent sympathy with their labours, they were tempted from the true paths of patient investigation and discovery into the glittering but steep and slippery byways of mysticism and magic. How different might have been their courses, and how much might they not have accomplished for the benefit of mankind, had their lot fallen among a generation capable of understanding, of appreciating, and of checking them. I do not mean, of course, to say that these men went astray for want of a certain kind of University teaching. There were Universities in those days as in these, and the men of whom I speak were

members of them and frequented them. Roger Bacon himself was educated at Oxford and Paris. But the Universities of that day were so wholly given to what is known as scholastic teaching, or the teaching of the schoolmen, that the true natural philosopher had no chance of fair play, and was likely to be even more persecuted within his own place of learning than in the outer world.

In the present day matters are very different, and the student may find here the comfort and support of which he stands in need, and will receive the assistance which a university is so well qualified to give him in his pursuit of truth and his labours for the advancement of science. Those of you who have read, as I have done, the story of the first establishment of your own great school of medicine by the labours of Dr. Munro—the difficulties, the prejudices, and the persecutions with which it had to contend, and the marked success which at length crowned the efforts of its founders—will have before your eyes an admirable illustration of the truth which I am endeavouring to place before you. But while I point out to you how great are the advantages which you possess for the prosecution of your own studies, let me impress on you the consideration that it is not for your own sakes alone that you ought to turn those advantages to account. These foundations were not laid, these buildings were not erected, these professorships, and teacherships, and scholarships, and prizes, and degrees were not instituted, for the private and personal benefit or advancement of you whom I now see before me. It was for the good of the nation as a whole that our ancestors laboured in the cause of education, and you who reap the fruits of their labours must show that you appreciate not only what they have done for you, but the motives with which they did it. Let me read you a line or two of very well-worded exhortation, which perhaps you will not value the less because it was written in your old Scottish dialect, not many years, as I take it, before the foundation of this University. I quote from that curious old book called the *Complaynt of Scotland*, and from the chapter which is headed “How the afflicted lady, Dame Scotia, reprochit

hyr thre sonnis callit the Thre Estaitis of Scotland." I will omit the reproaches, which are pretty strongly expressed, but this is the patriotic language in which the lady conveys her exhortation :—"Alas! the nativity o ane man suld be litil prisit, and his lang live days less desirit, when there proceeds no fruit of his labours, but for his ain singular utilitie, and nocht for the public weal. Alas! the natural love of your native country should be inseparably rooted in your heartis, considerand that your lyves, your bodies, your habitation, your friends, your livings, and sustentation, your hail, your peace, your refuge, the rest of your eild, and your sepulture is in it!" I suppose there is no part of Her Majesty's dominions in which patriotic language like this will find a heartier or a clearer echo than in Scotland.

But you will not be content with applauding noble sentiments, you will make them your own; you will take them as the guides and as the springs of your life. You young men who are going out into the world with minds well stored with the treasures of ancient and of modern literature will burn to distinguish yourselves in the service of your country, whether it be in the senate, the law court, the author's chair, or in the administration of the Empire. You who have learned to search out the secrets of nature, and to bend her mighty forces to the purposes of man, will remember how great is the power which you have acquired, and how, in an age when social questions are taking the first place in our attention, the scientific man has the means of doing more even than the statesman to remove the causes of sorrow and suffering, and to ameliorate the physical condition of the great masses of the people. And you, to whom a still higher call may be addressed, and whose mission it will be to minister to the spiritual wants and to advance the spiritual welfare of your fellow-Christians, will betake yourselves to that noble work in the consciousness that the lessons you have learnt in your college will animate you throughout the exercise of your sacred calling, and that to you will belong the honour which your national poet embodies in one of the noblest of lines, when you will

Stand, a wall of fire, around your much-loved isle.

Iddesleigh (1 earl) Stafford Henry Northcote.

**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
SIR STAFFORD HENRY NORTHCOTE**

**(FIRST EARL OF IDDESLEIGH)**

**G.C.B., D.C.L., &c.**

**LORD RECTOR**

**"DESULTORY READING"**

**NOV. 3, 1885**





WHEN I had the honour of addressing you on the occasion of my inauguration, I expressed a hope that it might be in my power to visit you again in the course of my term of office, so that the intercourse between your Rector and the great body of students might not be limited to the single address which custom prescribed, and which has, I think, usually furnished the only opportunity for our being brought together. I expressed this hope, knowing that under any circumstances I should feel the advantage of occasionally renewing my acquaintance with the University. But since the time to which I refer, much has happened to increase, and, if I may use the phrase, to intensify, the feelings of regard and of kindly good-will which were engendered at our first meeting. We have rejoiced together and we have sorrowed together. We rejoiced in the interesting proceedings which attended the celebration of the Tercentenary; we sorrowed at the common loss which we sustained in the death of our esteemed and distinguished friend, the late Principal. I should be wanting in all right feeling if I did not take this opportunity of again bearing my testimony to the high qualities and the eminent services of Sir Alexander Grant.

I have referred to these two links in the chain of affection which, I hope, binds us together; but there is still another matter upon which I am anxious to say a few words, and which brings us more directly to the business of this evening. Within the last two years the students of this university have done much to quicken and to develop what I may call the University life. You have felt that, in order to gain the full advantages which these seats of

learning are able to offer, it is necessary for you to adopt some methods of common action, to set on foot an organisation capable of furnishing you with the means of expressing your wants and of taking steps to supply them. It is to this movement, as I understand, that we are to attribute your coming together to-night; and I trust I am a good augur when I foretell that this meeting will be followed by many more, at which I hope you will have the benefit of valuable lectures by eminent men upon the various subjects of interest upon which they will be able to address you. It is a wise idea, and I trust it will not only deserve but command success.

And now, gentlemen, you have done me the honour to ask me to open the ball, and to deliver something in the nature of a lecture. If I had had more command of my time, and could have given to any subject which I might have selected the study which a man ought to give before he presumes to appear before the public as a lecturer, I would gladly have made the attempt. But it is not so, and I feel that I must ask your indulgence if I shrink from the inspiriting call which would bid me soar with the Dirccean swan, and content myself with a humbler imitation of the Matinian bee. Alike in the subject which I shall choose, and in the mode of handling it which I shall adopt, I shall endeavour to avoid the charge of presumption; and I therefore trust that I may disarm criticism, and escape the mortification of ill-success. I shall not attempt to tread the high paths of science, or to enter far into the domain of philosophy. Neither shall I adventure upon the more elevated regions of literature, or seek to explore the temples of the Muses. My theme will be the pleasures, the dangers, and the uses of what is commonly called desultory reading; and I hope to be allowed to decline for my address the more pretentious title of a lecture, and to describe it rather as a desultory discourse.

Not that I regard desultory reading as unworthy of philosophical examination, nor desultory study as a contradiction in terms, though some might be disposed to call it so. I can well understand that severer critics might be

tempted to apply to me the line of Terence, quoted by Horace, in which the wiser slave tells his young master that love, having in itself neither reason nor judgment, cannot be treated by counsel and by argument; and that I might be told that desultory work was at best only to be tolerated, and was certainly quite unworthy of serious discussion. I dissent altogether from such a theory as that, and I shall try, before we have done, to set before you some considerations to show not only the charms, but also the utility, of the desultory method.

You are, I doubt not, familiar with the distinction between deductive and inductive reasoning. It always seems to me that the severer method of study is the more applicable to the former, and the lighter or desultory method to the latter. The continuous reader will make the better progress in reasoning and in drawing deductions from given premisses. The desultory reader will, or may, succeed more effectually in cultivating the faculty of observation, and in collecting the materials which must form the foundation for the inductive science.

As regards the comparative pleasures and advantages of close and of desultory study, I would liken the one to a journey by railway, the other to a journey on horseback. The railway will take you more rapidly to your journey's end, and by its aid you will get over much more ground in a day. But you will lose the variety of the walk up the hill, the occasional divergence from the hard road, and the opportunities for examining the country through which you are passing, which the horseman enjoys. The business man will prefer the train, which will carry him quickly to his bank or his warehouse; but he will miss many things which the other will have seen and profited by, provided, of course, that he has made good use of his faculty of observation.

For it is upon such a proviso as this that the case of the desultory worker really turns. He must not be a loiterer, shuffling out of the trouble which his more methodical comrades put themselves to. He must have an object in view, and he must not allow himself to lose

sight of it. We are not to confound desultory work with idleness.

It is useful to look to the origin of words. The word "desultory" is of Latin parentage, and it was applied by the Romans to describe the equestrian jumping actively from one steed to another in the circus, or even (as was the case with the Numidians) in the midst of battle. That, certainly, was no idle loitering; it was energetic activity, calculated to keep the mind and the body very much alive indeed. That should be the spirit of the desultory reader. His must be no mere fingering of books without thought how they are to be turned to account. He may be wise in not allowing himself to become a bookworm; but he must take care not to become what is much worse, a book-butterfly. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well, and it is possible so to regulate and pursue a seemingly desultory course of reading as to render it more truly beneficial than an apparently deeper and severer method of study. This world of ours is an old world, full of the works and records of many generations. We are in daily contact with the fragments of the past, with traces here and remains there which attract our attention either for their intrinsic beauty or utility, or as indications of the manners and habits of mankind in former ages. Among these records assuredly there are none which are of greater interest, or of higher value, than the records, mere fragments though they may often be, of human history and human thought which are to be found in books. The poet tells us how we may so read the great book of nature that we may find in the trees, the stones, the running brooks, lessons which may profit as much as sermons. But while cordially accepting this teaching, we may observe that the trees and the brooks would hardly convey all these useful lessons to us if we had not a considerable knowledge of books to begin with. The lover of nature will find much revealed to him which the mere bookworm will wholly fail to notice; but, on the other hand, the well-read man who can apply the teaching of his books to the objects which he sees around him will profit far more than his illiterate companion.

I do not, however, desire to dwell on what may be considered little more than a truism. What I wish to point out to you is, that so great is the mass of our book-heritage, that it is absolutely impossible for any one, and doubly impossible for one who has other engagements in life, to make himself acquainted with the hundredth part of it. So that our choice lies for the most part between ignorance of much that we would greatly like to know, and that kind of acquaintance which is to be acquired only by desultory reading.

When I say this, I do not forget that a third alternative may be offered to us. We may be told that though we have not time to read the books themselves, we have always the means of becoming acquainted with their contents by the aid of abstracts, abridgments, and other convenient instruments for the close packing of information. Nobody is more ready than I am to acknowledge the utility of these pieces of intellectual mechanism. They are most valuable for reference, and are often indispensable for saving time. But to regard them as equivalent to, or even as a decent substitute for, the books themselves, would be a fatal error. They serve the purpose which is served by a dictionary; and if, as Charles Lamb maintains, dictionaries are not to be reckoned as books, so neither ought these compressed masses of information to be admitted to that honourable title. I may have occasion to return to this point, and to offer a few remarks on the question of cramming; but for the moment my object is to eliminate this kind of false study from the comparison which I am anxious to draw between the sustained and the desultory methods of true study.

With regard to these two methods I would, in the first place, observe that, speaking generally, the world has need of them both. We need students who will give themselves up to strictly limited subjects of study, will pursue them with all their heart and mind and strength, and with that kind of devotion which we may call student's love. These must be men animated by the spirit of our old giants of learning, of whose powers of reading we hear so much, and of whose powers of writing we see remaining so many sub-

stantial proofs. Yet even with these men the intermixture of some general and desultory reading is necessary, both for the very purposes of their study, and in order to relieve the strain of the mind and to keep it in a healthy condition. I never read so many novels in succession as during the months that I was working for my degree at the rate of ten or twelve hours a-day; and in the week when I was actually under examination, I read through the *Arabian Nights* in the evenings.

I forget who the great judge was, who, being asked as to his reading, answered that he read nothing but law and novels. But there is plenty of literature besides novels, and besides the *Arabian Nights*, which will be good for the relaxation of the mind after severe study, and I venture to think that the more miscellaneous our selection is, the more agreeable as well as the more profitable it will be.

So much for the consideration of one's own mental health. But beyond that, it is, I think, evident that a certain amount of miscellaneous reading is of great importance to the student in relation to his main study itself. Illustrations of his work will be presented to him, often from the most unexpected quarters, which will sometimes cheer and lighten his labour, and sometimes very usefully supply hints for further or wholly different lines of inquiry. As I said just now, for inductive reasoning we need a wide field, where we may pick up materials which may suggest new starting-points in the process of discovery. The student who is also something of a man of the world will often go further than the man who shuts out the light of day that he may give himself wholly to his folio and his lamp.

Study is like the heaven's glorious sun

That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks :

Small have continual plodders ever won

Save base authority from others' books.

These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights

That give a name to every fixed star

Have no more profit of their shining nights

Than those that walk and wot not what they are.

Too much to know is to know nought but fame ;

And every godfather can give a name.

There is a good deal of wisdom in these sarcastic lines, which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Biron in *Love's Labour's Lost*. It is the wisdom of the student who is also a man of the world, and who looks suspiciously or contemptuously on

The book-full blockhead, ignorantly read,  
With loads of learned lumber in his head.

I might occupy a good deal of your time if I were to set myself to bring together all the judgments that I could find in our great literary works against the pedant. But it would be somewhat beside my mark, for there may be desultory readers who deserve the name of pedant as much or more than those cloistered toilers who are chained to the desk by the love of the study itself, who have no thought or wish to parade themselves and their acquirements before the world, or to seek for praise and admiration for their learning. Chaucer's Scholar, who

Would lever have at his bed's head  
Twenty bookes in white and red  
Of Aristote and his philosophie  
Than robes rich, or fidel, or sautrie,

had not a touch of the pedant about him. Indeed I doubt whether any true lover of learning for its own sake can ever deserve that unpleasing appellation.

But, as you have often been told, "*Studia abeunt in mores*"; and it is with a view to give you some hints as to the effects of particular methods of study upon your habits and your characters that I am now inviting your attention to systems of reading.

In the first place, I would offer a plea in favour of desultory reading (or at least of a certain amount of it), because it leaves a man more at liberty to pursue the particular line which suites his taste and his capacity. This is, I suppose, the ground on which Dr. Johnson commended the practice. "I would not advise," he says, "a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought



to read just as inclination leads him, for what he reads as a task will do him little good."

Lord Bacon, too, in his well-known essay, tells us that there are some books to be read only in parts, others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention.

Both these high authorities, therefore, recognise the propriety of leaving the student some latitude in his choice of books and in his method of reading.

But while this freedom is largely to be respected, it ought not to be allowed to degenerate into laxity. The tendency of a great many young men, and of old ones too for that matter, is not only to read widely, but also to read indolently; and indolent reading is as much to be discouraged as diligent reading is to be commended.

There is a fine passage in Mr. Carlyle's Inaugural Address when he was chosen Rector of this University.

"We ought to cast aside altogether," he says, "the idea people have that if they are reading any book, that if an ignorant man is reading any book, he is doing rather better than nothing at all. I must entirely call that in question: I even venture to deny that. It would be much safer and better for many a reader that he had no concern with books at all. There is a number, a frightfully increasing number, of books that are decidedly, to the readers of them, not useful. But an ingenious reader will learn also that a certain number of books were written by a supremely noble kind of people,—not a very great number of books, but still a number fit to occupy all your reading industry. . . . Books are like men's souls, divided into sheep and goats. Some few are going up, and carrying us up heavenward; calculated, I mean, to be of priceless advantage in teaching—in forwarding the teaching of all generations. Others, a frightful multitude, are going down, down; doing ever the more and the wider and the wilder mischief. Keep a strict eye on that latter class of books. And for the rest, in regard to all your studies and readings here, and to whatever you may learn, you are to remember that the object is not particular knowledges—not that of getting higher and higher in technical perfections, and all that sort of thing. There is a higher aim lying at the rear of all that, especially among those who are intended for literary or speaking pursuits, or the sacred profession. You are ever to bear in mind that there lies behind that the acquisition of what may be called wisdom—viz. sound appreciation and just decision as to all the objects that come round you, and the habit of behaving with justice, candour, clear insight, and loyal adherence to

fact. Great is wisdom ; infinite is the value of wisdom. It cannot be exaggerated ; it is the highest achievement of man. Blessed is he that getteth understanding."

You will, I think, have noticed at more than one point in this address, that your late Rector's warning was directed as much to the manner as to the matter of your reading. It is not only, perhaps it is not so much, a question of what you read, as of how you read it. Undoubtedly there are great and noble works, such as Mr. Carlyle probably had in his mind, which are qualified to produce a great effect, and to lead the soul and the intellect distinctly heavenward ; while there are undoubtedly some which have a directly noxious and harmful character. But the great mass of books are, like the great mass of men, a mixture of good and evil, and are neither to be blindly followed nor blindly rejected. It would but narrow the mind in the first place, and depend upon it that from narrowing to perverting is but a short step.

Here the advice of a very wise counsellor (especially to youth), the late Dr. Arnold. He says :—

"Keep your view of men and things extensive, and depend upon it that a mixed knowledge is not a superficial one. As far as it goes, the views that it gives are true ; but he who reads deeply one class of writers only, gets views which are almost sure to be perverted, and which are not only narrow but false. Adjust your proposed amount of reading to your time and inclination—this is perfectly free to any man ; but whether the amount be large or small, let it be varied in its kind, and widely varied. If I have a confident opinion on any one point connected with the improvement of the human mind, it is on this."

If, then, we agree that the most important question is not what, but how, we shall read, let us consider the dangers against which we must be on our guard. I have already touched upon that of indolence, even though it be busy indolence. There is another fault which we must avoid, that of misdirected energy—the energy of the unhappy student whom Mr. Lowell selects as the butt of his clever satire :—

A reading machine, ever wound up and going,  
He mastered whatever was not worth the knowing.

It is to men of this sort that the old proverb applies: they cannot see the wood for the trees. They are so intent upon details that they lose all idea of the whole; and for want of grasp of the whole they lose the benefit of the very details with which they so energetically busy themselves. The remedy is not far to seek, and I may give it as a remedy applicable to both the faults of which I have been speaking: it is, always to read with an object, and that a worthy object. Perhaps, in saying this, I may lay myself open to the charge of opposing myself to that desultory reading of which I have been rather declaring myself a defender. But it is not really so. There is no reason why a desultory reader should not be a reader with an object. He may be following up a train of thought which leads him to consult first one work and then another; he may be seeking for evidence of facts which can only be satisfactorily ascertained by collating a great number of authorities, and he may be examining many books which he only knows by name to see whether they throw any light upon the subject of his researches. Not improbably, while he is reading with such a purpose as that, and is looking a little below the surface of what he reads, he will, as it were, stumble on quite unexpected discoveries, such as the pedantic student, who has devoted himself to the closest reading of which a machine is capable, would never by possibility have made. Lord Beaconsfield's favourite saying that adventures are for the adventurous, applies to the literary adventurer at least as much as to any other. Or, again, you may be reading with a view to discover the full meaning of an author who has obtained celebrity, and who has exercised an important influence over the minds of men; or you may be studying mere style and power of expression. Or you may be comparing the author's writings with what is known of the author's life. In short, there are endless objects which you may be pursuing while you seem to be aimlessly turning over the leaves of one book after another, and to be wasting time which you are in fact employing most profitably as well as most diligently.

But there is yet an object with which a man may read,

and with regard to which it is desirable that I should say a few words, because it connects itself with some very practical questions of the day. A man may read hard in order to "get up," as it is called, some particular subject or subjects for an examination. In short, he may give himself up to be crammed. And cramming has now a very different significance from that which attached to the same process before the days of competitive examinations.

In old times a man would cram in order to get admiration. Probably the less he knew the more he desired the reputation of knowledge, and in order to gain that reputation, he was likely to try all manner of short cuts to it.

Have you ever read the amusing account which Seneca gives of a wealthy man of this class—Calvisius Sabinus? This worthy had a large family of slaves and freedmen, and he was troubled with a short memory—so short, indeed, that he would confuse Achilles with Ulysses, and hopelessly forget Priam. Still he desired to appear learned, and he had the wit to discover the means. He laid out a large sum in the purchase of slaves, one of whom knew Homer from beginning to end, another Hesiod equally well, and nine others who were thoroughly acquainted with as many great lyric poets; or when he could not buy them ready-made, he bought the slaves and had them trained; and when once he had got his forces in order, he took to worrying his friends, and making their supper miserable by turning the conversation into channels which enabled him to show off his learning; for, as he justly argued, learning which he had bought and paid for at so high a price assuredly was his own.

Such was cramming in the days of the Roman empire. In our own day it is not quite the same in form, though perhaps there may be more resemblance in substance between the crammer and the crib on the one side, and the learned freedman on the other, than we should at first be inclined to admit. But it would be unjust to deny that, given the necessity of preparing for an examination, upon the results of which the whole career of a young man

probably depends, it is natural, I may almost say it is inevitable, that special preparation should be made, and that preparation should take the form of a rapid storage of the memory with as many salient pieces of knowledge as possible, due regard being had not to the education of the mind of the student, but to his being prepared to gain the largest number of marks in the shortest time.

I do not desire now to enter into the great question of the competitive examinations. It is one on both sides of which there is a great deal to be said, and I am far too sensible of the advantages of the system to use hasty words of a depreciatory character. But this I wish to impress upon you, that regarding the matter from an educational point of view, we cannot but say that learning is too sensitive to be successfully wooed by so rough and so unskilful a process; and that it is only for those who approach her in a reverent and loving spirit, and by the regular paths of patient and careful study, that she will open the portals of her abode and admit the student to her heart. It is with her votaries, as with those of the Leaf in Chaucer's beautiful poem :—

Knights ever should be persevering,  
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,  
Fro wele to better in all manner thing.  
In signe of which with leaves aye lasting  
They be rewarded after their degree,  
Whose lusty green may not appaired be.

But though learning is not to be won by short cuts or royal roads, yet, as the philosopher's stone could turn whatever it touched into gold, so the true lover of literature can, by the alchemy of a sympathetic mind, find the true gold of the intellect in the works to which he applies himself. Recall to yourselves, for example, that well-known epistle in which Horace draws forth the lessons of Homer's great poems, in which, as he says, the poet teaches the secrets of human life and traces the springs of human action more fully and more excellently than either Chrysippus or Crantor. Or, again, take Wordsworth's beautiful lines on the divinities which the lively Grecian's fancy could find

in his land of hills, rivers, and fertile fields and sounding shores. These are but samples of the thousand ways in which the true poetic fancy will detect beauties or lessons which, to a less observant eye, would be invisible.

Or, leaving the realm of fancy, how many unexpected lights upon questions of history or philosophy will reveal to the practised and attentive reader truths and evidences which are all the more striking because they are unconsciously disclosed! Take, for instance, that curious little article (shall I call it?) of Lucian's upon the pseudo-mantis, the charlatan Alexander, whose tricks and devices he exposes, and whose success in imposing upon the credulous he details. Observe how, quite casually, he remarks that his hero was able to deceive all classes of philosophers except only two sects—the Epicureans and the Christians. He merely mentions the fact, so far as concerns the Christians; but how suggestive a fact it is! The Epicurean, who disputed the intervention of the gods in human affairs altogether, might naturally be supposed to be incredulous and proof against superstitious pretensions; but with the Christian it might have been thought that the very reverse was likely to be the case, and in truth his rejection of the wondrous displays of the deceiver would be due not to scepticism as to spiritual manifestations, but more probably to his belief that these things were of the works of the evil one, and were to be put away as abominable.

But why should I detain you with illustrations of what every reader must soon discover for himself, that the wisdom, the graces, the soul and spirit of a book are as nothing until to that book be applied a mind and an intelligence capable of drawing forth those charms, which to inferior or less sympathetic spirits are revealed, if at all, in an inferior degree, and of which we properly say that they are *φωναῖντα συνετοῖσιν*?

Perhaps there is nothing more noticeable than the treatment which a work of humour, or it may be of fancy, receives at the hands of those who are themselves destitute of those qualities. You Scotchmen are often twitted with want of power to perceive a joke—you, the countrymen of

Scott and Burns, and of that galaxy of wits who made the society of Edinburgh so famous in days not long gone by ! But I am not going to take an illustration from Scotland. I will call into court an Englishman, whose memoirs we are all fond of dipping into at our idlest hours, and never without amusement, and yet whose absolute deficiency in these particulars is unspeakably delightful. Mr. Samuel Pepys seems to be wholly wanting in all sense of the ridiculous, and to be equally devoid of any spark of fancy. Here is his estimate of the highest, gayest, loveliest piece of fancy in the world : " To the King's Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life."

We must not, however, confine our attention to works of humour or of fancy alone. They are, indeed, most valuable in the development, perhaps even in the formation, of character, and we cannot but admire and feel grateful for the lessons which they teach us. But they would pall upon us if we sought to make them our sole companions. As Mr. Lowell says of new books—

For reading new books is like eating new bread :  
One can bear it at first, but by gradual steps he  
Is brought to death's door by a mental dyspepsy.

So it may be said of books of the lighter class that they would not furnish the mind with the food it requires if our reading were confined to them alone.

What, then, ought the young to read ? It is indeed a grave and serious question ; but I am not going to attempt to answer it by prescribing a detailed regimen or course of study. That I must leave to be decided upon according to the circumstances of the student, the profession which he is about to follow, and the advice which his tutors or professors may give him. If his training is to be mainly scientific, then I should say that it is peculiarly desirable that his reading should be mixed and miscellaneous, so that while he is investigating the secrets of nature, he should not neglect to acquaint himself also

with the secrets of the human heart. If, on the other hand, his line is to be literary, I would keep the light literature somewhat down, lest by its fascination it should draw away the mind from the more serious studies. It is sure to be taken up later, and with all the more pleasure and profit if a good foundation has first been laid by steady literary work. Look some day, if you are not already acquainted with them, at Sir W. Scott's remarks upon desultory reading in the early chapters of *Waverley*, and take his warning against the dissipation of mind to which, with some natures at all events, it is likely to lead.

I content myself with saying that it is one of the great advantages of such places of learning as our universities, that every student has the means of readily obtaining advice, guidance, and assistance in laying out and in pursuing a course of serious study. He will here be introduced to the great minds of the past—to the historians, the philosophers, the orators, the poets—whose works have charmed and have instructed generation after generation; and he will be shown how best to employ his time in turning his acquaintance with them to profit. The only piece of advice I would give is one which no doubt he has received from many others: it is, to make a point of mastering at least one subject of study by sheer hard work, without the aid of any of the ingenious inventions for saving time and trouble which are so dangerously tempting. Set your faces alike against the use of cribs and translations, and against the skipping of difficult passages. Do not try to turn the flank of a difficulty, but brace up your mind to overcome it. By doing this with one or more branches of your work, you will strengthen your mental powers and gain a vantage-ground from which you will be able with ease to invade and conquer the fruitful plains of knowledge which you will perceive lying open before you. As a wit once said, "Easy writing is confoundingly hard reading," so we may say of easy study that it means terribly barren knowledge. You may, indeed, apply to true knowledge the noble lines in which Wordsworth addresses the Grecian crowd who shouted when they heard the proclamation of



their country's freedom at the hands of their conqueror.  
Those who desire to gain that glorious boon—

Must either win by effort of their own  
The prize, or be content to see it worn  
By more deserving brows.

It is rather tempting at this stage of my observations to open once more the old controversy between the Ancients and the Moderns, and to fight the "Battle of the Books" over again. But I am unwilling to do it, because my object is not to set one generation or one country against another, but rather to awaken in you an interest in the literature of all time, and to find the points which authors of different ages and nations have in common, rather than those on which they may be supposed to be at variance.

You may remember that the "Battle of the Books" began by a demand addressed by the Moderns to the Ancients that the latter, who were the occupants of the higher of the two summits of Mount Parnassus, should either resign their time-honoured occupancy in favour of their younger neighbours, or else should allow the Moderns to come and level the hill with their shovels and mattocks to such a height as they might think convenient. This modest proposal was courteously but summarily rejected by the Ancients, who, as an alternative, proposed that the Moderns should rather occupy themselves with raising their own side of the hill than dream of pulling down the other.

This was excellent advice, applicable perhaps to other cases of rivalry besides that of jealous authors: and, looking upon the course of events since Dean Swift's days, we may, I think, say that it has on the whole been followed. Assuredly the authors who have arisen both in this country and in others within the last century and a half have done much towards raising the modern standard; while, in spite of the changes which modern education has brought about, in spite of the pressure of scientific competition, in spite of the discouragement of quotations, and the banishment of Horace from the House of Commons, ancient learning is still held in high esteem, and year by year fresh excursions

are made into its well-known territories, and fresh discoveries are reported from its well-trodden plains. If modern literature has any competition to dread, it is not that of the old classical writers, but of the daily, weekly, or monthly periodicals, which fall as thick around us as the leaves in Vallombrosa, and go near to suffocate the poor victim who is longing to enjoy his volume in peace, whether that volume be of Sophocles, or of Shakespeare, or of Goethe, or of Burns. Or if by chance our would-be student is one who, for his sins, is engaged in political contests himself, he may recall the position of Walter Scott's Black Knight at the siege of Front de Bœuf's castle, when deafened by the din which his own blows upon the gate contributed to raise. How, under such circumstances, he must wish that he were like Dicaëopolis in the "Acharnians," and could make a separate peace for himself!

But may my good angel preserve me from entering into anything like a controversy with the great periodical press! It is a mighty engine with a giant's strength, which we can only trust that it may not use like a giant, or at least not like the traditional giant, who is supposed to be given to tyrannous exercise of his powers. Cowper's lines mark well its excellences and its faults:—

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,  
Thou god of our idolatry, the Press?  
By thee religion, liberty, and laws  
Exert their influence and advance their cause;  
By thee, worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell  
Diffused, make earth the vestibule of hell.  
Thou fountain at which drink the good and wise,  
Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies,  
Like Eden's dread probationary tree,  
Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

Knowledge of good and evil! Yes; whatever may have been the original position of our first parents, we, their descendants, have this knowledge forced upon us, and we cannot escape from it. Our aim and object must be, not to escape or to close our eyes to it, or to keep it out by the method of the wiseacre who shut his park gates against the

crows; but to neutralise the evil by seeking out the good, and to strengthen our minds by sound discipline, and purify our taste by the loving study of literature of the nobler type, so that we may instinctively reject that which is mean and unworthy.

I must leave to yourselves the question of the amount of time you ought to give to the current literature of the day. Much of it is addressed to particular classes of persons, and has an interest for them which it does not possess for others. Much, on the other hand, consists of popular renderings of abstruser subjects, sometimes admirable and useful to all, sometimes, it is to be feared, of little value or interest for any one. Habit and a little trying experience will soon teach you to discern how much of a periodical is worth the expenditure of much time; and you will not be long before you acquire some skill in the arts of dipping and of skipping.

Of novels I must speak in somewhat the same strain. There is probably no form of idleness so seductive or so enervating to the mind as indiscriminate novel-reading. Yet some of the best and most truly instructive books in the world belong to this class. From *Don Quixote* to *Waverley*, from *The Vicar of Wakefield* to *The Caxtons*, from Miss Austen or Miss Edgeworth or Miss Ferrier to Charlotte Brontë or George Eliot, you will find what Horace found in those great Homeric poems, humour and wisdom, and a keen insight into the strength and the weakness of the human character. Think what a mine of wealth we possess in the novels of your own great master, what depths he sounds, what humours he makes us acquainted with, from King James in his palace to Jonathan Oldbuck in his study; from Jeanie Deans sacrificing herself to her sisterly love in all but her uncompromising devotion to truth, to the picture of family affection and overmastering grief in the hut of poor Steenie Mucklebackit; or again, from the fidelity of Meg Merrilies to that of Caleb Balderstone! You have in these, and in a hundred other instances, examples of the great power of discerning genius to seize upon the secrets of the human heart, and to reveal the

inner meanings of the events which history records upon its surface, but which we do not feel that we really understand till some finer mind has clothed the dry bones with flesh and blood, and presented them to us in their appropriate raiment.

I will permit myself to make but one more remark on Sir Walter Scott—for I am always a little in danger of running wild about him—and it is this: Our ancestors and ancestresses read for their light literature such books as the *Grand Cyrus* and Pembroke's *Arcadia*. I never tried the former. I have made one or two attempts on the latter without much success. But I have sufficient general knowledge of their dimensions and of their character to be sure that no one with a volume of Scott at hand would ever deliberately lay it aside in favour of either of them. May I not hope that the same preference, which you instinctively afford to him over works such as those I have referred to, you will also extend to him in comparison with the great floating mass of unsubstantial and ephemeral literature, which is in truth undeserving of the name, but which is unfortunately attractive enough to tempt you to choke your minds with inferior rubbish?

And now let me say a few words to you upon poetry. We are told on high authority that the poet is born, not made. Perhaps the same might, in a lesser degree, be said of his readers also. There are some natures which approach more nearly to the poetic than others, and these can best appreciate the thoughts that underlie a poem, and the power of expressing those thoughts in appropriate, perhaps in striking, language. But in almost every one I imagine there are implanted some seeds at least of the faculty of which we speak, and these seeds are capable of cultivation. A man may not be able to make himself a poet—and I am sure we would all join in praying that he may never try—but he may be able to train himself to understand and to love the poetry of others. Indeed we cannot doubt that so it must be when we see how widely spread, and among what varying classes of mankind, is the thirst for poetry of some kind. The ballad is, I suppose, the simplest and

earliest form of it. Scotland and England have alike contributed largely to ballad poetry; and whether your *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* or the *English Reliques of Ancient Poetry* is to be preferred, I leave you to judge for yourselves, recommending both collections to your favourable notice. Your older poets are, I suppose, now but little read; yet I was struck by finding some time ago, when I happened to ask at the London Library for Barbour's great poem on the Bruce, that, though the library boasted of three copies, they were all three at that moment lent out. I was pleased to think that in these days, when it is as necessary as it ever was to plead the cause of personal freedom, there should be a run upon a book which contains that spirited apostrophe:—

Ah ! freedom is a noble thing !  
Freedom makes man to have liking.  
Freedom all solace to man gives ;  
He lives at ease that freely lives.  
A noble heart may have none else,  
Nor else nought that may him please,  
If freedom fail ; for free liking  
Is yearned over all other thing.

There has been of late years a striking revival of popularity in the case of Barbour's great contemporary, Chaucer. Let us hope that your countryman may have a similar fortune. But we cannot easily rank any one with Chaucer. For variety, for power of description, for touching and tender appeals to the feelings, for genuine, though sometimes rather coarse, fun, and for delineation of character, he occupies a place in the world of poetry such as few can aspire to.

You have other poets well worthy to be read. Sir David Lindsay, Allan Ramsay, and others, will be names with which you are familiar, though perhaps they may not be widely read. But your greatest poet, excluding or not excluding Scott, is one whom all, I trust, find time to study. I mean, of course, Robert Burns.

I am about to quote a sentence or two on the character of Burns's poetry from the work of a friend whom we have

lately lost, well known not only as Principal of one of your famous universities, but also as Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, one much valued by all to whom he was known,—the late Principal Shairp. This is his judgment:—

“At the basis of all his power lay absolute truthfulness, intense reality, truthfulness to the objects which he saw, truthfulness to himself as the seer of them. . . .

“Here was a man, a son of toil, looking out on the world from his cottage, on society low and high, and on nature homely or beautiful, with the clearest eye, the most piercing insight, and the warmest heart, touching life at a hundred points, seeing to the core all the sterling worth, not less the pretence and hollowness of the men he met, the humour, the drollery, the pathos, and the sorrow of human existence; and expressing what he saw, not in the stock phrases of books, but in his own vernacular, the language of his fireside, with a directness, a force, a vitality that tingled to the finger-tips, and forced the phrases of his peasant dialect into literature, and made them for ever classical. Large sympathy, generous enthusiasm, reckless abandonment, fierce indignation, melting compassion, rare flashes of moral insight, all are there. Everywhere you see the strong intellect made alive, and driven home to the mark, by the fervid heart behind it.”

I will not weaken these vigorous words by any addition of my own. I remember the warning given by Charles Lamb that it is almost more dangerous for a Southerner to praise Burns to a Scotchman than to dispraise him. But you may well believe that we Englishmen have a true and a warm appreciation of the great poet.

*Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora.*

I am sure that it must be unnecessary for me to say anything of the great stream of leading English poets from Shakespeare to Milton, to Dryden, to Pope, to Wordsworth, Scott, and Byron. But there are others less universally read whom I wish to call your attention to—especially the great dramatists of or about the Shakespeare age. Ben Jonson probably deserves the first place among them. His racy representations of the follies and oddities, and, as he would call them, the humours of the day, are balanced by the classical reproductions which led Milton to speak of Jonson's learned sock, though there are indeed some which

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almost rise to the dignity of the buskin. The *Alchemist*, the *Fox*, and the *Every Man in his Humour*, have made themselves well known. Let me commend to you a less-read drama, *Catiline*, in which the story of the great conspiracy is finely told, partly through noble paraphrases of Cicero and Sallust, and partly through the play of the dialogue between the conspirators. If any of you should be tempted to read it, let him take note of the delicious piece of partly personal, partly political gossip among the Roman ladies, which leads to the betrayal of the plot. There is another clever Roman play, the *Poetaster*, which would have been a rather appropriate subject for discussion to-night, for it tells the old, old tale of the struggle between father and son—when the one enjoins the study of the law, the other flies resolutely to his studies in poetry.

There are two beautiful plays of Ford's, the *Broken Heart* and the *Lover's Melancholy*, which bear reading over and over again:—

As for some dear familiar strain  
Untired we ask, and ask again ;  
Ever, in its melodious store,  
Finding a spell unheard before.

Massinger is interesting, and you doubtless know several of his plays by name, if not more intimately.

But I must not linger over these, nor try to find a fit place for Spenser, whom I honour much and read a little, especially his first book ; or for Marlowe, the pioneer of the English drama, whose delicious little song, "Come live with me and be my love," carries one from the crowd and the struggle of life to country scenes worthy of Izaak Walton himself ; or for that very little-read Drayton, whose great *Polyolbion* seems as if it might have filled the place of a Bradshaw's *Guide* to tourists of the "Arcadia" stamp. Let me tell you that you will find a good deal of very good poetry in that same *Polyolbion*, if you venture to face it. And I am leaving out Cowley, and Waller, and a hundred more ; and I am not even attempting to enter upon the poetry of the eighteenth or of this present nineteenth cen-

ture; nor upon our prose-writers, nor upon the great field of foreign literature; though it is with difficulty that I turn away from those giants of France, Pascal and Molière, from whom there is more to be learned than from any two writers of their day, and who well repay the closest study. Nor have I said a word of the classics, whom I fear I must group all together, and bid you "*Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*"

It might seem, when we are running through a catalogue such as I have been suggesting to you, that we are awakening the dead to bear us company. May I quote to you some beautiful lines of Southey's—to which he gives the title of "The Scholar"?

My days among the dead are past;  
Around me I behold,  
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
The mighty minds of old.  
My never-failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,  
And seek relief in woe;  
And while I understand and feel  
How much to them I owe,  
My cheeks have often been bedewed  
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the dead; with them  
I live in long-past years,  
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,  
Partake their hopes and fears;  
And from their lessons seek and find  
Instruction with a humble mind.

My hopes are with the dead; anon  
My place with them will be,  
And I with them shall travel on  
Through all futurity;  
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,  
That will not perish in the dust.

And now, gentlemen, my time is drawing to a close, and I must not adventure myself further in seductive flowery fields of desultory charm. I believe it is good for



us all occasionally to indulge in such recreation under the shade, even in the midst of a hot day's work. The work will not be the worse done for such a respite. But we must not allow it to be forgotten. Those dead of whom the poet speaks are not only our companions, they stand round us like a great cloud of witnesses to mark how we perform the task which has been given us to do, and fight the battle which has been committed to our hands. If there be any slackness or any cowardice on our part, their voices will "sound like a distant torrent's fall," and will reproach our shortcoming. But if we be honest and valiant, we shall not turn to them in vain for sympathy and for encouragement. Among them we shall find the records of those who have passed through harder trials and accomplished greater deeds than those which are demanded of us. They have, many of them, won eternal fame; be sure that it did not settle quietly upon their brows: it was won in the only way in which fame can be worth the winning—it was won by labour. That is the path which they trod: it is the path which you must tread also. I will take my last quotation from one who is well known to you all,<sup>1</sup> whom I need not name, for you will recognise his words at once.

Rocking on a lazy billow  
With roaming eyes,  
Cushioned on a dreamy pillow,  
Thou art not wise;  
Wake the power within thee sleeping,  
Trim the plot that's in thy keeping,  
Thou wilt bless the task when reaping  
Sweet labour's prize.

<sup>1</sup> Professor John Stuart Blackie.

ADDRESS

BY

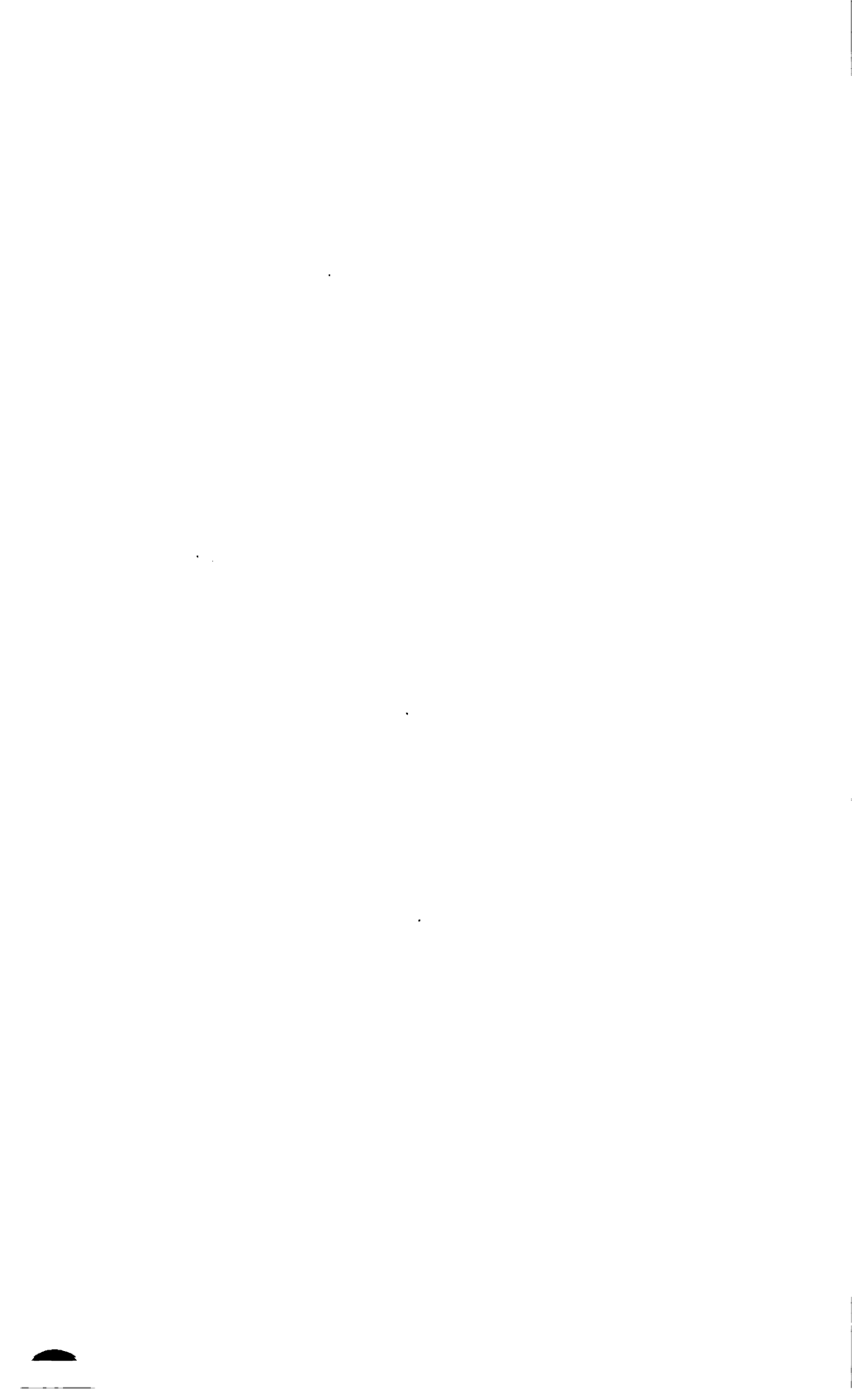
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
GEORGE JOACHIM GOSCHEN

M.P., LL.D., D.C.L.

LORD RECTOR

“THE USE OF IMAGINATION IN STUDY AND IN LIFE”

NOV. 19, 1891



My first duty is to express to the students here assembled my grateful thanks for the honour they have done me in electing me to a post which has been filled by so many illustrious men, and which brings each successive holder of it into such friendly touch with this famous University. Let me assure you that the heavy pressure of political existence has not crushed out my academic instincts, and that to meet a large assembly of students, and to discourse to them of matters affecting University life, is a most welcome interlude in those other occupations, unmentionable on this occasion, in which it is my fate to be engaged; no suggestion of which, however, shall be recalled to my mind even by the walls of this hall, which, somehow or other, I seem to have seen before. The pleasure of meeting you will be enhanced if I should be able to give a practical proof of my gratitude to you by any thoughts or suggestions which might help to forward the great work in which this University is interested.

I see around me distinguished men to whom, in each of your special branches of learning or science, you look for guidance and help. I stand in the midst of men who have doubtless been the critics—I hope the indulgent critics—of successive Lord Rectors, the value of whose addresses on things in general they have been able, by the help of their deeper knowledge of things in particular, to submit to a very searching test. The diversity of your studies increases the embarrassment of a Rector, who would wish to address no single school, but to find some common ground of interest, some topic on which he might equally claim the attention of the students of the humanities, of medicine, of

philosophy, of science, indeed, of all the faculties. Clearly, he must search for that common ground, not in the subject, but in the method of study; not in the material, but in the instrument by which the material must be moulded and manipulated.

The discussion of methods of study has, I confess, always inspired me with particular interest. The choice of the method has often appeared to me almost equal in importance to the choice of the subject-matter of the study itself. To one method of study I propose to direct your minds to-day.

I want to bespeak your attention to the use to which the faculty of imagination should be put, in the pursuits in which you are engaged. To another audience, on a previous occasion, I have spoken of the cultivation of the imagination, of the sharpening of this instrument for use. To-day, I will assume the existence of this form of intellectual force. I will assume that the imagination has been already cultivated, that you all possess this precious faculty in a greater or less degree, and I will ask you to accompany me in an investigation of some of the occasions for its actual application.

At the outset of this inquiry I must define what I mean, using the liberty, so often claimed, of more or less choosing my own definition. I need not say that I exclude the meaning which is sometimes attached to the phrase "a lively imagination"; that is to say, a mental habit which, departing from fact, expatiates on what is contrary to fact, and scarcely escapes from untruth. The imagination which I have in view is the power of picturing absent things, of presenting to the mind's eye visions of the past or the future, of realising the mental attitude and thoughts of another person or of an alien race.

This constructive imagination takes its start from facts, but it supplements them and does not contradict them. It is a faculty the conceptions of which probably present a truer picture than those afforded by knowledge of fact alone, vivid, truthful pictures, which knowledge of fact alone would not enable us to paint. It is employed sometimes

retrospectively, when the aim proposed is to bring together and to depict conditions which no longer surround us, to lead our footsteps backwards through the ages; sometimes prospectively, by those who would lead us forwards, who would

Dip into the future far as human eye can see,

and construct for us a vision of the days to come, and of conditions which are not yet existent.

Perhaps I may be best able to illustrate my meaning if I contrast this creative imagination, this power to construct or reconstruct, with the faculty of analysis. The operation which I have in my mind is the very opposite of analysis. Analysis eliminates, separates, strips off, reduces. Analysis discards temporary conditions, surrounding circumstances, and reduces what is under examination to its simplest form. Analysis in Economics seeks to discover the general principle by what may be called the destructive process. It has, I admit, a fascination of its own.

The function of constructive imagination, on the other hand, is to proceed in the opposite direction. Its work is, by an effort of the mind, to realise and depict what is not present to the sight or palpable to the touch. Take history, for example. Historical analysis will evolve a general law, common to all periods, to all generations of men, out of the complex conditions of a given age or ages. It will seek what is like. It will strip off the temporary, the accidental. Its work is elimination. Historical imagination, on the other hand, will endeavour mentally to restore the picture of a past age, of which the colours have faded with time. It will not neglect details, for details are a great part of life. It will endeavour to restore the special character, the movement and the stir, which drier annals have failed to preserve. ✓

Take, again, the sciences which deal with animal life. The analytic method separates nerve from muscle, bone from tendon, limb from limb. It endeavours, so far as possible, to examine separately the function and constitution of each vessel and member, of each component part of the

organism, and to isolate it from the disturbing and sympathetic influences of other parts of the frame. Analysis may be necessary before synthesis can be applied; but it is the synthetic, the imaginative method I venture to call it, which, by use of the materials accumulated by analysis and observation, enabled Charles Darwin to undertake that mighty reconstructive effort which embraces the past, the present, and the future, of animal life upon our globe.

- Deficient imagination is often found in the moral world. Often you find in men an absolute incapacity to realise an unfamiliar situation, to grasp conditions which are not immediately visible, to recognise facts which to others are a plain and patent element in their life. That incapacity springs from a dull and uncultivated imagination. Suppose this incapacity, this want of power to understand the surroundings by which the motives, the characters, the influences of men different from ourselves are determined;—suppose it to characterise intellectual studies, and truth will suffer, knowledge will be impeded, education blighted, and interest lost.

Students may be suffering from lack of imagination without being conscious of their shortcoming themselves. They read and they criticise. Theories seem preposterous to them, illustrations absurd. Unable to understand the spirit of a time in which they do not live, or to realise conditions with which they are not themselves familiar, they discard sound teaching, simply because they have not sufficient imagination to re-create in their minds the circumstances under which the theory was composed, and the illustration adduced.

I shall invite you to follow me presently into the field of Economics, where the want of prospective imagination has hampered the most famous writers, and the want of retrospective imagination has warped the views of some of the most distinguished critics. I shall ask you to follow me in the application of imagination to other studies. But you will, I think, be better able to grasp the full import of the bearing of my thesis upon your own actual intellectual work, if, in the first instance, I illustrate the

operation of retrospective and prospective imagination in the domain of literature.

Let us begin, then, by examining to what extent the presence or absence of the exercise of that faculty which I have called imagination lifts or lowers the work of authors who attempt to reconstruct the past. Some there are whom you feel to be able to realise the conditions of vanished ages, to imagine the men and women of former generations, and the surroundings amidst which they moved, in such a manner as to convey to their readers a real and lifelike picture of the very form and body of the time. Others, who make the like attempt, seem merely to have collected facts with diligence and accuracy. The facts may be strung together on the thread of a fictitious story, but, because the life-giving breath of imagination is absent, the result is a handbook of antiquities and not a living picture of the past. Have any of you read *Charicles* or *Gallus*, the works of the learned Becker? The author was a man of profound research. He had studied the habits and customs of the Greeks and Romans. He had wide knowledge of what had been written as to their dress, their education, and their laws. He was acquainted with every detail of their civic and private occupations. And what is the result? He produces the furniture, but not the life, the outline of the picture, but not the colouring. Wanting in imagination, he has not the power, perhaps not even the wish, to reconstruct the past as a living whole. He puts the dry bones together, but he cannot put flesh upon them, or send the blood coursing through the veins. His accumulations are of great value no doubt, but we feel as we read that we are walking in the valley of dry bones, and doubt, with the prophet, whether these dry bones can live.

Or take a tragedy of Racine. His talent was undoubtedly great. We are no longer in the valley of dry bones. His heroes live and move with a stately and regal grace, but they move in a French atmosphere. He has imagination, but not the historical, the retrospective imagination, which is necessary for the true reproduction of



the past. There is a French ring about the valour and passion of his Greeks, and Agamemnon walks with the air of the Grand Monarque. Goethe's *Iphigenia* stands, to my mind, on a higher level. I do not mean merely that the German poet has successfully adopted the outward form and method of Greek tragedy, but that the eternal, the vital part of human nature, that which is common to Greek and German, to classical and romantic times, speaks to us from his stately verse. But even here we feel no confidence as we follow his narrative that we are moving in a reconstructed past.

But Shakespeare? Have we not there more confidence? Though he may be inaccurate historically, though he may abound in anachronisms which may call a smile from superior persons, do we not feel that his splendid imagination has recalled to us real men and women of a long-past generation, and breathed into them the spirit of the time in which they lived? Cæsar and Anthony may dress like Elizabethans, but in essentials they are true Romans. To me, I confess, the reproduction of the spirit of the past, of the colouring, the flesh and blood of older generations, has a peculiar fascination and a higher interest even than absolute historical accuracy as to facts. Here I may be treading on delicate ground. Is not absolute accuracy the first duty of the historian? Should not the exposure of myths, the destruction of false stories, which have been handed down to us, have the first claim on our literary gratitude? Alas! that I should confess it, not on mine.

Give me a historian who, with the faculty of realising conditions which have passed away, can paint us a general picture of a period which we wish to recall. Give me a historian who can make us feel as if the men and women of ancient times were moving in bodily shape before our eyes, surrounded by the circumstances of their own day, obedient to the standard of feeling and duty under which they were brought up, not speaking the language of to-day, not influenced by motives which were foreign to their time, —and I shall feel that he is educating me more thoroughly in the science of history than if he had given me any

amount of tabulated information, any record of simple transactions, any acute analysis of individual characters. For my own part, true to this possibly heterodox creed, I love historical novels composed by a master hand, and I believe that a great multitude of readers sin in common with me.

I believe that a large number of Scotchmen, aye! and of Englishmen, have gained more real insight into the history of their country by the aid of a joyful course of Walter Scott, than by the stiffer study of learned historians, who lack the imagination without which, in my humble opinion, history cannot properly be written. I will not go so far as to say, before an audience of which erudite professors may form a part, that I have learnt as much of French history from Alexandre Dumas as I have from professional historians, but I shall not very deeply resent the charge if it should be brought against me.

I have tried to convey to you what I mean by constructive imagination, and I have dealt with it thus far from the retrospective point of view, from the point of view of the efforts of authors to paint us pictures of the past. But other writers have undertaken a bolder task. From classical times downwards to the latest development of English and American romance, from Plato the philosopher to William Morris in our own day, social reformers with literary powers and imaginative minds have aspired to frame ideal states, ideal societies, and have engaged their constructive faculty in the description of conditions removed from the ordinary experience of the times in which they lived, and of the ages of which history holds record. I will not speak now of the prophetic rhapsodies of poets, from the inspired visions of the Hebrew prophet, from Virgil—

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying in the blissful years again to be,  
Summers of the snakeless meadow, unlaborious earth and earless sea—

to Tennyson, singer of the "Golden Year," and of the dream of progress in *Locksley Hall*. I would invite your attention for the moment to the particular branch of literature which

is devoted to the construction of Utopias, the examination of which has much attraction for me. The various accounts of Utopian communities, apart from their philosophic, their literary, their political interest, offer excellent materials for the study of various forms of imaginative labour. In no department of science or literature can we analyse with more advantage the various uses to which creative imagination may be put.

With the celebrated Utopias of the past many of you are familiar. Plato, Sir Thomas More, Bacon, Harrington have all exercised their imaginations in the creation of an ideal Republic, an Utopia, an Atlantis, or an Oceana. The creators of these older Utopias laid their fanciful communities in contemporary but distant islands, or imagined them as having existed in their own country thousands of years ago. They described the ideals which existed in their own minds, rather than their hopes of what, by revolutionary changes, existing societies might ultimately become.

On the other hand, the latest specimens of this kind of literature deal with the future. The politics they create are laid a century or two hence. They are prophetic, they are evolutionary and revolutionary.

The prophetic romance is indeed becoming a feature of the literature of to-day, but we must note that as a rule it is also propagandist romance. Imagination is pressed into the service of a zealous apostle of a particular creed. The creed may sometimes have but one article, the prophecy may be penned in illustration of a particular theory, or to bring home some special professional point. Such was the case with *The Battle of Dorking*, a fine specimen of a forecast in which all the conditions of an imaginary war were graphically and realistically worked out. The writer of that clever sketch has had many followers, and the prophetic *brochure* has become a recognised weapon in the armoury of the military, the naval, the sanitary, the municipal reformer.

These are efforts of imagination, but they cover but a limited area of thought. The conditions which are brought to notice do not involve any violent hypothesis. Different

from them are the Socialist novels, which assume the entire subversion of existing institutions, and portray conditions resulting from the establishment of Society on what we should call a Utopian basis, though they are distinguished in many respects from the Utopia of More. Constructive imagination has certainly been called into play in their production; but, in most cases with which I am familiar, it has been a limited imagination, imagination harnessed to a theory and directed to work out particular results, not ordered to realise the natural effects which certain causes are likely to bring about when all conditions of the problem are taken into account. The premise of the Socialist Utopian writer is that all the evil passions by which human nature is now marred, all sin and crime, all misery and unhappiness, are due to our existing institutions; and that if these institutions were swept away, and replaced by an ideal arrangement, under which the commercial system, the manufacturing system, the competitive system, with all their horrible accompaniments of money and exchange, buying and selling, would no longer find a place,—every man and woman would be sublimely happy, incomparably beautiful, imperturbably virtuous, unutterably calm. Every human infirmity would disappear with the disappearance of money. There is but one exception—one rift within the lute. William Morris admits that so long as the passion of love remains, the passion of jealousy would also survive.

I have compared Morris's fanciful picture in *News from Nowhere* with the American Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. There is much that is common to both of them. The leading idea of both is a Society where buying and selling have ceased, where goods are held in common, where there is no individual property and no money, and therefore no necessity for law, and no temptation to crime. In both, the underlying theory appears to be that it is the existence of our perverted social arrangements which has made men and women what they are. But in the constructive part of their work you find a fundamental difference. Bellamy paints a Society where the common stock of goods is

replenished by carefully regulated labour, and distributed among the individual workers according to a minute and elaborate system, under which tickets and orders on State Stores take the whole place of individual possession. Every man, woman, and child is part of a most complicated system, with a distinct place and function of their own. His Society represents the organisation of labour and distribution in the most complete form imaginable.

Morris's system, on the other hand, is simplicity itself, for there is no organisation at all. Production and consumption, collection and distribution, labour and the enjoyment of the fruits of labour are to be left to adjust themselves; and the author has an enviable confidence in their power to do so successfully. He assumes that production, free from all the disturbing elements of competition, free from the necessity of manufacturing articles which people do not really want, free from the drawbacks attending private enterprise and active commerce, will easily overtake consumption, and that thus supplies will be so abundant that everybody may have their fill without stint, and no human wants remain unsatisfied. Every one will love labour when he can choose freely the work which he likes and when he is no longer compelled to work at all. The only fear which the writer feels is not that there would be a difficulty in providing food, clothing, houses, and adornments for the citizens of the rural paradise into which manufacturing England has been converted, but that all their wants would be so easily and abundantly supplied that there might be a deficiency of work for them to do, a deficiency of tasks to satisfy their keen appetite for labour.

Though these works of fiction are in one sense clearly imaginative, it seems to me that these descriptions of the men and women, who gracefully people the reorganised world, are nevertheless lacking in imagination. The constructive faculty has been architectural, not pictorial. The men and women are nearly all alike—alike among themselves, alike in the different books. Naturally alike, the authors may say, because the endless diversity of existing types is due to the artificial disturbances of our form of

civilisation. And yet would a true conception of the future of human beings represent every member of human society as temperate, calm, passionless, industrious, and intelligent? Bellamy's Bostonians of the year 2000 are exactly like Morris's Arcadian villagers of the twenty-first century. Human nature is suppressed in both. Or is it I who am wanting in imagination? Is it I who, saturated with nineteenth-century notions, am unable to construct in my mind the natural results of a revolution in our existing social organism? I think not. These novelists have eliminated, discarded, dropped too much. But then they write with a purpose.

I trust that none of my academic hearers have mentally quarrelled with me because I have lingered in the realms of poetry and fiction. Those who have followed me closely, and perhaps, here and there, have read between the lines, will have anticipated how I should apply the operations of constructive imagination, as illustrated in Utopian fiction, to the sterner studies which are at present the business of your lives. The transition from such fantastic novels, from dreaming poets and speculative visions, to the hard problems of political economy, is easy and natural. At first sight, as you pore over the pages of Adam Smith or John Stuart Mill, you may possibly think that you may let imagination lie dormant for a season. On the contrary, there is no branch of study where I would wish you to invoke it with more zeal. The want of imagination in writers and critics has, as I ventured to hint before, often led to profound misunderstandings. The present generation open such a book as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. They are startled at some of the doctrines; more startled by the illustrations. They assume, accordingly, a critical attitude. They cannot believe that wisdom and truth can exist in such surroundings. Call imagination to your aid. Endeavour to realise the conditions of the time in which the author lived. Study his theories, with a full understanding of the history of those days, and you will still be charmed and edified by almost every page of his great work.

And while you use your imagination in reading his

writings, note the imaginative power, the wonderful imaginative power, which he himself exhibits. I once had the advantage of hearing a very able critic deliver an address on the *Wealth of Nations*. "I do not mean to say," he declared, "that Adam Smith had not a great command and a very great knowledge of history, of law, of philosophy, and of almost everything that can make an accomplished writer; but he had, in addition to these, this peculiar quality—that he had the sagacity to enter into the minds of mankind; and in dealing with the subjects with which he dealt, he had the faculty of anticipating and foreseeing what they would do under certain circumstances; and this has given him the power of raising Political Economy to the dignity of a deductive science." Lord Sherbrooke (Robert Lowe as he was then) in those words described the special quality of prospective imagination. He proceeded: "No doubt the attempt was made—and a noble attempt it was—by Mr. Bentham, Mr. Mill, and others to raise politics to a like eminence. They thought they could foresee what particular persons, or a particular class, would do under certain political conjunctures, and they attempted to raise a demonstrative and deductive science of politics as Smith did a science of political economy; but I am bound to say that, as far as my own opinion goes, that effort, meritorious and great as it was, has failed, and the science of politics has still to be written." Possibly other authorities may think that some of Adam Smith's predictions on political economy have shared the fate which Mr. Lowe assigned to those of Mill on politics; but Mr. Lowe insisted on his point over and over again: "The test of science is prevision or prediction, and Adam Smith appears to me in the main to satisfy that condition." "I think that Adam Smith is entitled to the unique merit among all men who ever lived in this world of having founded a deductive and demonstrative science of human actions and conduct."

Yet what was one of the main bases on which Adam Smith's predictions were founded?—that every man would act according to his own interest as he understands it. This was treated by Mr. Lowe as an assumption which

experience had shown to be universally true: the discovery of this law he looked on as "unique in mental science, and entitling Adam Smith to the very highest rank among those who have cultivated the more abstruse parts of knowledge." Mr. Lowe could not imagine that this very law would, by many men, be held to be shaken to its very foundations in these later days; men who would not admit with him "that the principle and rules he had laid down have served for the guidance of mankind from Smith's time to the present, and will last as long as mankind shall seek after truth, or busy themselves with any intellectual study whatever."

Mill himself took a different view of the *Wealth of Nations*. He praises Smith for what he calls his most characteristic quality, namely, that he invariably associates principles with their applications. But he proceeds to say that the *Wealth of Nations* is in many parts obsolete, and in all, imperfect. Mill explains that he himself is undertaking a work similar in its object and general conception to that of Adam Smith, but adapted to the more extended knowledge and improved ideas of the present age.

"No attempt," he considered, "had been made, since Adam Smith wrote, to combine his practical mode of treating his subject with the increased knowledge since acquired of its theory; or to exhibit the economical phenomena of society in the relation in which they stand to the best social ideas of the present time, as he did with such admirable success in reference to the philosophy of his century."

I object strongly to the use by Mill of the word "obsolete," in relation to the *Wealth of Nations*. If Adam Smith is considered obsolete, who knows whether Mill's great work itself may not before long be considered obsolete too? Indeed, I have heard it whispered that that heresy has already been hatched. Yes; that work would be obsolete to those who lack the faculty which I am urging on you to bring to bear on all your studies. To those who make no attempt to reconstruct the past, to those to whom present conditions alone seem plausible, who cannot imagine



how any other order of things can have existed before, or be likely to exist in the future, works which deal with contemporary illustrations will alone be instructive and profitable. But for educational purposes, surely the progressive series of attempts to explain theories and principles by the phenomena of successive generations is of more value than the study of such principles judged and tested by the phenomena of our own day alone. Your task in your studies is to revivify the apparently obsolete, and to realise to yourselves, if you can, the illustrations which are taken from a different age. A young economist has well expressed the system of investigation which accords with my contention that economic theories must be judged and studied in relation to the times when they were evolved. Mr. Ashley says in his preface to *Economic History*:—

1. Political Economy is not a body of absolutely true doctrines, revealed to the world at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, but a number of more or less valuable theories and generalisations.

2. Just as the history of Society, in spite of apparent retrogressions, reveals an orderly development; so there has been an orderly development in the history of what men have thought, and therefore in what they have thought concerning the economic side of life.

3. As modern economists have taken for their assumptions conditions which only in modern times have begun to exist; so earlier economic theories were based, consciously or unconsciously, on conditions then present. Hence the theories of the past must be judged in relation to the facts of the past, and not in relation to those of the present.

4. Modern economic theories are not universally true. They are true neither for the past, when the conditions they postulate did not exist, nor for the future when, unless Society becomes stationary, the conditions will have changed.

Mill calls the *Wealth of Nations* obsolete. I had forgotten it; but curiously enough it was while taking a holiday turn at Mill that the idea struck me how interesting a topic would be found in an examination of old theories tested by new conditions. The world moves fast; and much has happened since Mill wrote which, to a dull understanding, might impair the value of some of his generalisations, and of many of his illustrations. His own

imagination is often admirable. His power of realising other conditions than those under which he wrote seems to me most striking. But, nevertheless, the student of to-day will find much that in his haste he might think obsolete. Who could foresee forty years ago the attitude of our Australian Colonies on such a question as emigration. Economists had in their minds the necessary welcome which young communities would give to the spare labour of the older hemisphere. The unwillingness of the working-classes in the Antipodes to allow the introduction of competing hands seems now a matter of course. And, here in the old world, such has been the revulsion of feeling on questions of labour, such have been the changes in public opinion as to fundamental points in our social organism, that the student of to-day, brought up in a new atmosphere and fed on new principles, will open his eyes with wonder at what writers of an earlier period described as absolute unvarying laws. The assertion of altruism, as an equally existent force with egoism, casts so changed a light over the study of Economics, that before long a sustained effort of reconstructive imagination may become requisite before the key to past writings will be found.

I have shown you the capital necessity for the use of imagination in a science certainly not classified habitually as imaginative. Let me now examine the need for its presence in another region where you would least expect to find it; I mean, in the sphere of the exact sciences. I must leave any detailed development of this part of my subject to those whose special studies qualify them to speak with authority upon it, but I hope that men of science and mathematicians will forgive me if I trespass for a moment upon their domain. Mathematics may seem at first sight to deal entirely with fact—fact of the barest and least imaginative kind. What place has imagination, my hearers may say, in the multiplication table, or in a proposition of Euclid? I would reply, that the whole study of geometry is an imaginative study. The lines with which geometry deals are not the imperfect lines which are drawn upon the paper or the slate, but the ideal lines which have length

without breadth, and which, therefore, can exist only in the imagination. No man has ever seen or ever will see a circle or a square which complies with the definition of a circle or a square. The thing defined exists only in the imagination, and every proposition in geometry involves the exercise of that faculty.

This use of the imaginative faculty is so much a part of our normal habits of thought, that we scarcely realise that our imagination is at work at all. But with some of the higher forms of mathematics it is far otherwise. You may remember that a few years ago Professor Cayley, as President of the British Association, revealed to the world, so far as the world was capable of understanding them, some of the mysteries of space. I admit that my own imagination is bounded by the three dimensions of space in which we live and move, and which fashion the mental conceptions of most of us; but I have, therefore, the greater admiration for the effort of mind which enables mathematicians, such as Professor Cayley, to transcend those conditions, and to form an imaginative conception of space of 4 or 5 or  $n$  dimensions, and for the science which enables them to ascertain, with absolute precision, the laws and conditions which would prevail in an imaginary universe.

In those abstruse branches, too, of mathematical or physical science which deal with the problems of the ultimate constitution of matter, and of the nature and *modus operandi* of the forces which act upon it, it will hardly be denied that imagination is a powerful and even a necessary implement. When I think of your fellow-countryman, Sir William Thomson, engaged on atoms and molecules, piercing the secrets of the smallest entities, brooding over the mystic dance of ethereal vortices, while his magic wand summons elemental forces to reveal the nature of their powers to his scientific gaze, I forget the disciplined accuracy of the man of science, while lost in wonder at the imaginative inspiration of the poet.

Few of you can hope to reach such eminence as his. Few, perhaps, can expect even to move upon the same

plane of scientific inquiry. But in all physical research I am convinced that no powerful instrument, no lens, no microscope is more essential to your equipment than a true imaginative mind.

For the connection between poetry and science I have the high authority of a great poet. Tennyson deeply felt the imaginative grandeur of science. Let him speak himself:—

What be those two shapes high over the sacred fountain,  
Taller than all the Muses, and huger than all the mountain ?

These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible Muses !

Muses ! yes. Not music alone, nor poetry, nor simply creative art, but the colossal forms of Astronomy and Geology are ranged by the side of the graceful goddesses, and dwell on the height of Parnassus beside the sacred fountain of imaginative inspiration.

What shall I say of other sciences ? If I were to speak of them at length, I should pass the limits of your patience ; but few of them would be found able to dispense with imagination. I have spoken metaphorically of imagination clothing the skeleton of the past with flesh and blood ; but the Palæontologist does more than this, not in metaphor, but in reality. It is his task, not from a whole skeleton, but, it may be, from a single bone, to re-create in imagination the extinct animal of myriads of years ago, and to tell us of his form and gait, of his habits and manner of life.

But it is not in your studies alone that I urge upon you the exercise of this illuminating and stimulating faculty. When you go forth into the world, armed with the intellectual instruments which you have forged and sharpened during your University career, with your minds stored with acquired knowledge, and equipped with all the capacities for future accumulation, do not think that you can afford to discontinue its use. Its vigorous employment will check that intolerance which sometimes springs from the premature dogmatism of confident youth, sometimes from the fanaticism of its too enthusiastic beliefs. Intolerance and fanaticism can more satisfactorily be restrained

by that wholesome imagination which vividly realises the thoughts and feelings of other men, than by that infusion of scepticism, which is one of the most pernicious drugs of the age. Let intolerance, which is the child of absolute personal conviction, be not simply checked by undermining that conviction through the negation of the existence of positive truth, but let it be softened by the habit of studying and realising to ourselves the counter-theories of men who think differently from us.

Again, there is something worse than intolerance, cruelty. Conduct which assumes various forms of cruelty may be due not simply to innate perversity or to a corrupt nature, but to an utter incapacity to understand feelings or conditions which are different from our own. The antidote is such a resolute effort of constructive imagination as will vividly realise the effect of pain on organisations perhaps more delicate than those of which we have experience. Imagination which enters into the feelings of others will increase the happiness of social life, will prevent a thousand asperities, will surround its possessor with that sympathy which he himself will exhale.

You are going forth to various vocations, bearing with you varying ambitions and divers sorts of gifts. Some will become ministers of the Church, others physicians, others lawyers, others professors, teachers, authors, investigators—all of you citizens and men. Apply, I entreat you, the general purport of what I have said each to your individual case. Future ministers of religion, what will the use of imagination be to you? It will be the secret of your power over others, the spell by which you will win your way into the hearts of your flock. What will it avail you to thunder words from the pulpit which will strike the minds of your hearers, only to rebound from them, and will fail to gain an entrance through those intricate channels which a sympathetic imagination alone can map out for your guidance? To you, above all, the power of realising the thoughts and feelings of others is the highest gift you can possess, the best faculty you can cultivate.

Doubtless many among you look forward to a scholastic

career. You will become schoolmasters, professors, teachers of various branches of knowledge to various classes. If, in entering upon your duties, you do not vigorously apply your imaginative faculties, you will be no better than mere machines, pouring out knowledge but not pouring it in. How much talent, how much research, how much splendid work has been wasted, because it is carelessly poured over the side of the vessel which it was intended to fill! No depth of learning, no fluency of speech will rescue the teacher from much barren work, if he lacks the capacity to place himself in touch with those whom he desires to instruct. And how can that magic bond be established except by the power to understand and feel that to which imagination must be our guide. Do you think that experience will act as a substitute? Scarcely; though doubtless it renders invaluable help. But so infinite are the diversities of the human organism, that the necessity for sympathetic insight can never be replaced.

That is the one side, but do not forget the other. You must not only have this sympathetic insight yourselves, but you must aim at rousing the imaginations of your pupils; and that not only because, as I have endeavoured to show to-day, it is a faculty which will be of the highest value to them in study and in life, but also because it is through the imagination of the pupil that you may bring interest and fascination into the weary round of tasks. How infinitely dull is geography as a study of names and numbers and outlines; how thrilling when on the wings of imagination the learner is transported to the splendour and gloom of tropical forests, or to the palms and temples of the South. But I resist the temptation to expand this topic, lest I should be led to stray from my theme of to-day, which is the uses to which imagination may be put, into the kindred theme of its cultivation, the subject of a former address.

I need not follow out the application of my theories to all the professions which you are likely to enter. I must leave something to your—imaginations. Let me simply declare that I cannot conceive the vocation, however simple,

however humdrum, however tied down to the dullest prose of life, which does not afford ample scope for the exercise of that bright faculty, on the virtues of which I hope that you will not think that I have dilated with undue enthusiasm. Still, I cannot part from my subject, or from you, without having said something on its special use to every one of you as citizens and men. In these days none of you can escape from some responsibility in helping to shape the destinies of your country, and in influencing that current of changes in our social system which is sweeping along with a quickening course. Large issues of State policy or of social economy will, soon after the student is metamorphosed into the voter, be submitted to you in the discharge of your duties as citizens. On these questions above all exercise your faculty of transporting yourselves mentally to the point of view of your opponents; on these questions above all bring a trained prospective imagination to bear. In the conflicts of classes, in the struggles of parties, the habit and the power of realising the standpoint of both sides is scarcely less important for the success of any cause of which you may be the champions than the firm belief in the truth of your own convictions.

And, with regard to questions of State, let your minds not concentrate themselves too much on the circumstances of the moment. Carry them forward to the future. Endeavour mentally to realise the conditions under which the changes submitted to your judgment will have to work themselves out. I admit the extreme complexity of the task. Who can foresee with any degree of regulated accuracy the play even of the simpler forces of Nature under the slightest change of conditions? The slaughter of insignificant animals, a check to the activity of the tiniest carriers of Nature's fertilising dusts, may have a far-reaching effect on the produce of vast areas of cultivated soil. Do you remember an instance of a very curious character which was adduced by Darwin? The fertilisation of plants can in some cases only be effected by a particular species of insect. Bumble-bees are necessary in order to enable red clover to produce seed. Field-mice are the foes

of bumble-bees, and destroy their nests underneath the ground. Cats are the enemies of field-mice, and thus, if cats should be decimated, either in consequence of penal taxation, often pressed upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or by any other scourge, there would be such an increase in the number of field-mice that bumble-bees would be exterminated, and fields of clover would lie in barren hopelessness, unable to produce a future crop. Or, again, are you acquainted with the result of the well-meant but ill-considered introduction of the rabbit to our Australian Colonies? The gift became a curse under the changed conditions of animal and vegetable and human life at the antipodes, and no parallel to a Hares and Rabbits Bill would serve to keep down the terrible pest. So again in the vegetable world, the consequences of a single act can often not be gauged except by imaginative foresight. The man who carried watercresses to New Zealand had not read *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Wallace tells us how this humble and tasty weed, transplanted to its new home, sheds its appetising qualities, and, growing with rampant vigour under changed conditions of climate and soil, forms stems twelve feet long, and blocks mighty rivers, instead of filling the baskets of the industrious hawker. And if the fates of the lower animals, and of flowers and plants, with their simpler organisms acting under simpler laws, present such astounding and unexpected changes when transferred to new conditions; if it is difficult to discern the end of the chain of causation which is set in motion by some apparently simple and self-contained change, what forethought, what careful prospective imagination, what effort to realise future possibilities must we not summon to our aid, when we have to deal with complex, incalculable, powerful man—man, swayed by a thousand diversities of motive; man, whose passionate organism science can scarcely classify; man, who is master not only of his own fate, but of numberless forces of Nature! Nay, more; if the probable action of a single man under changed conditions is a problem of the most complex kind, what shall we say of the complexity of the problem when we have to deal with men in the mass?

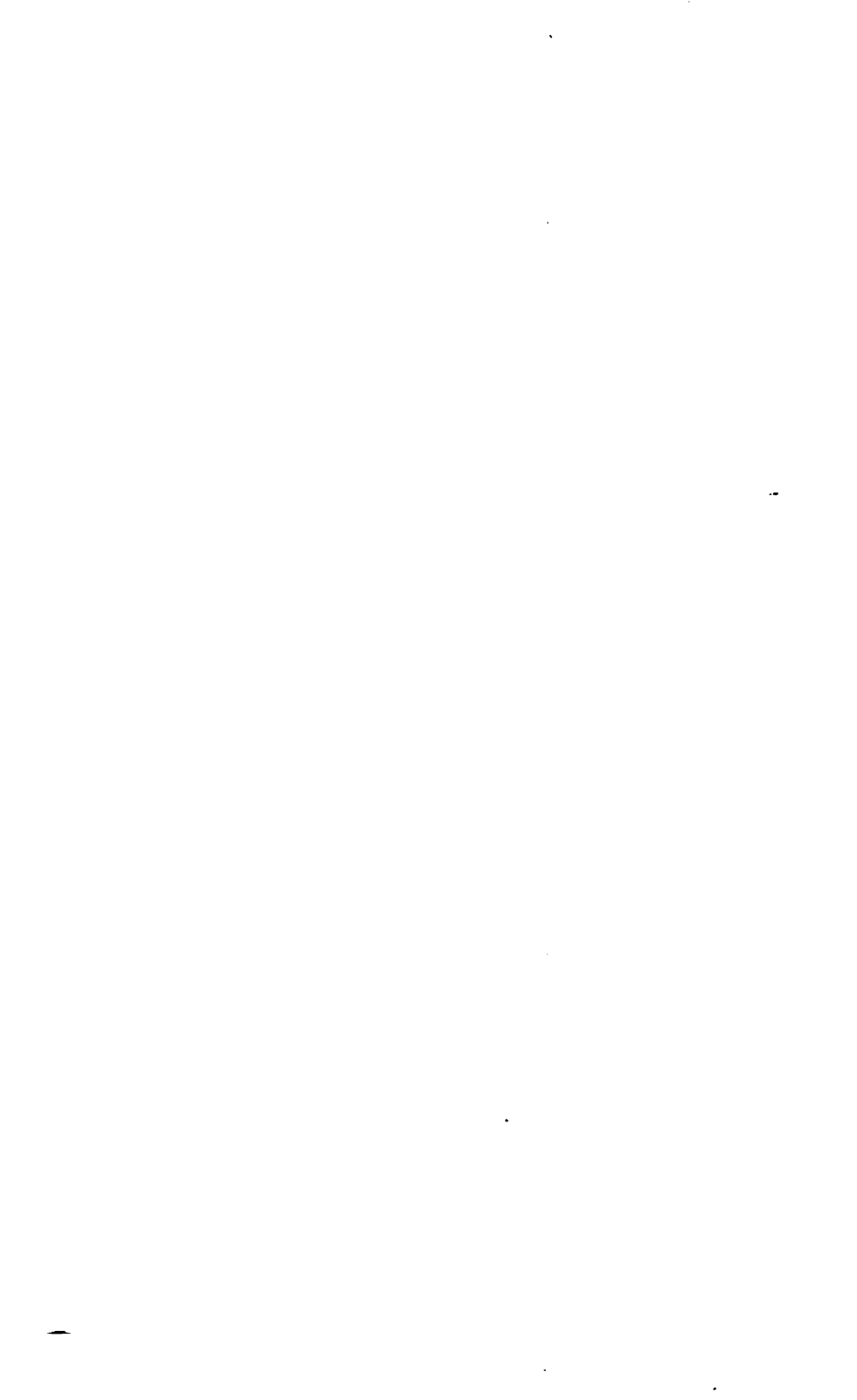


Yet problems dealing with men in the mass will inevitably be submitted to your judgment as citizens. You will not be able to solve them by the easy processes of the Utopian novelist. You will not be able, like them, to eliminate all human passions. Passions will not have been suppressed in your time. It will not be safe to rest the laws which you may be called on to enact on the assumption of supernatural and unattainable goodness. Progress, we hope and know there will be; but human infirmities will not have disappeared in your generation. You will still be bound to remember the teachings of Nature, and to reckon with a natural, though most complex, sequence of causes and effects. Let us put away from our thoughts present controversies, which, before the students of to-day enter the polling-booth as responsible householders, may possibly have been settled one way or another. Think of questions which the future may bring forth. I submit simply two or three illustrations; your own ingenuity will suggest many others. Fancy a question as to transplanting the sober growth of some British institution, the product of this temperate zone, to some tropical clime, to some more forcing soil. Remember the watercresses. Let your imagination realise in time how changes in conditions modify and falsify expected results. Or, fancy problems affecting the relations of some parts of the community to others. Fancy proposals by which the extermination or the paralysis of some genus or species of the human social family might be brought about. Remember the sudden barrenness of the field of clover, the result of suppression of the carriers of Nature's fertilising dusts.

Questions of labour will be always with you, however the controversies of the day may end. Bear in mind the serious consequences which may ensue to the wellbeing of the vast organisation on which the prosperity of the people rests, by any miscalculation of the effects resulting from the neglect of some apparently insignificant cause. On all such issues, aye, and on all the problems which a governing people such as ours has to solve, the faculty of imaginative foresight will be your most faithful guide. You will not neglect the lessons of historical experience, but you will test

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those lessons and correct them, and amplify them, by the exercise of what I ask you to consider as one of the most precious faculties which Providence has implanted in the human breast—the faculty of wise, sympathetic, disciplined, prospective imagination.



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE**

**J. P. B. ROBERTSON**

**(AFTERWARDS LORD ROBERTSON OF FORTEVIOT)**

**LL.D., ETC.**

**LORD RECTOR**

**"THE DUTY OF EDUCATED INTELLECT TO THE STATE"**

**DEC. 6, 1895**



MR. PRINCIPAL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—"Welcome ever smiles,—Farewell goes out sighing"; and our meeting to-day, occurring, as it does, more than half-way through my term of office, is tinged with the sentiments of your welcome and of my farewell. You are aware of the circumstances, widely removed from indifference on my part, which delayed my coming to tender, as I do now, my most grateful thanks for your placing me where I stand. He would be, indeed, insensible who did not appreciate the rare and most excellent quality of this honour; and the standard is stamped with the great names of my predecessors. A pious tradition of the University, indeed, asserts, for the chastening of the pride of successive Rectors, that personal merit is not the sole consideration that determines the choice of the electorate. Yet, such is the waywardness of the human mind that this reflection does not always abate the pleasure of the elected,—which is further enhanced by the ever-increasing generosity and friendliness of your contests. Nor can I be forgetful that it is my gracious fortune to be the first Rector elected by a constituency not confined to the darker sex. Addressing the whole body of undergraduates, I ask them to accept my hearty thanks and faithful service.

Among the many things which appeal to the imagination on a day like this, some are of salient interest. This is a Scottish University; many of its traditions are national, and some are local. But King James's College of Edinburgh has now, in the fulness of time and without ceasing to retain, in full resonance, the note of patriotism, become, in the highest degree, cosmopolitan. A moiety of our students are drawn from England, Ireland, Australasia,

Canada, and India,—while, on the other hand, no local partiality has prevented our chairs being filled by the best of the distinguished men, of all seats of learning, who have desired them. I do not know how this may strike others,—to my thinking it is another illustration of what we have learned in the more familiar experience of the Scot abroad. From the patriotic point of view, it teaches, once more, that the true ambition of Scotland is not to be satisfied with a commerce of the mind that is limited to our own land. It constitutes the body of undergraduates a living appeal to the imperial sentiment of the community in which they live; and it makes their confidence additionally honourable to those who gain it. Nor let the welcome which we give to those of whom I have spoken exhaust the thoughts to which they give rise. If, with sober pride, we may believe that the training of this University attracts men from afar, let us not forget that prestige must never be slept on. The credit of all colleges incessantly fluctuates, and is only maintained by achievement and prowess.

In this last remark I hope no one will catch a didactic tone; for I have not, in virtue of my office, any licence to teach, and still less to lecture. The motive of the observation was widely different. There is on foot, as you know, a movement for encouraging research by enabling picked men, who have shown scientific insight, to stay a while in the University and prosecute investigation, instead of at once entering medical practice. Can I be wrong in saying that this is a scheme most worthy of trial, and that its success would be fruitful of gain to the University as well as to knowledge? Looking, in the meantime, to the prosperity of the University, we need not merely the very best machinery for acquiring the very best skill in all the professions,—but here, as everywhere, it is the forward policy, the shining feat, that captivate mankind. Of the fair blossom of original discovery our University has never been destitute and is now justly proud, especially considering the slender encouragement such work commands. The newspapers show us that many wealthy Scotsmen die desiring to do something for education, or for Scotland, or

for Edinburgh, or for all combined. Is it too much to hope that, departing, for once, from the humdrum of educational endowments, some will be found to link their names, in imperishable honour, with the scientific future of their country?

I have followed to a very practical conclusion one of the thoughts suggested by the audience which I have the honour to address; may I now proceed to say something, which fortunately needs no such sequel, suggested by the place in which we meet?

This is, I suppose, the last great function of our University which will take place in a hired room. Hitherto our Alma Mater, on those occasions on which she assembles her children around her, has flitted about the city from one public hall to another, homeless and vagrant. The signal generosity of an individual is about to remove that reproach; and although it has not been given to me, as your Rector, to enter the promised land, I have had glimpses of it. Within that stately pile,<sup>1</sup> the eyes of generations of University men in the future, when they scan the highest splendours of the lofty dome, will rest on these words,—graven there as the first and last lesson to be learned,—“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get Wisdom: and with all thy getting get Understanding.” Other good gifts the University has to bestow, but this is the gift of her right hand. It is not professional skill, nor scientific knowledge, nor literary accomplishment, although all are instruments towards its attainment. It is the balanced mind, the candid disposition, the educated view, that perceives the relations of things, that is alive to analogies and not innocent of irony, that does not expect to find all things in categories, and all black or white, that is reverent to what is great and disaffected to what is smug. Not in mental acquisition, but in mental habit, is wisdom found. Nor is the wisdom that comes of education a mere substitute for, or improvement on, shrewdness or sagacity. No doubt, mother-wit will carry a man far; and, often, breeding stands him in good stead. But no natural gifts stand in place of the qualities that come of liberal studies, or can enrich the mind as they do.

<sup>1</sup> The M'Ewan Hall.



Nor, again, is such wisdom reserved only for those of shining parts or great erudition. Very moderate powers, so they include that of taking pains, will suffice to furnish and illumine the mind, and raise a man intellectually above his stronger fellows. And to some, who are very far from being deeply learned, there comes that feeling for what is sound and strong and fine, in literature and in thought, which enfranchises them as citizens of this world-wide republic.

It would, of course, be highly absurd to pretend either that every University man carries away this good gift with his diploma, or that it is confined to University men. The contrary is notoriously the fact. But not the less is the University the nursing mother of culture, and not the less are her sons its champions.

The word culture once fell into some disrepute from being identified with what is precious, elegant, and disdainful. In its pristine meaning, culture is made of sterner stuff. Appreciation of form and love of the beautiful are among its essential ingredients; but the crown and flower of all education is intellectual magnanimity. Hence it is that, in the choice of studies, wise men, if their leisure be small, will go to the main streams of thought and action. However interesting may be the byways of history, the curiosities of literature, and the eccentricities of criticism, it is not there that magnanimity will be learned. After reading the history of some small country, the controversies of some small sect, or the books of some small writer, one turns away to richer sources for relief and inspiration. O for the sonorous voice of many waters! for chords which have vibrated in unnumbered hearts! for the words of great men and the fortunes of great nations! Let those who have time explore the barren annals of tyrants and rebels, which begin and end in nothing,—be sure at least to stand by Burke's side when he unfolds the tale of undone kings and wasted provinces, and suffuses it with the glow of his heroic indignation; or when, with America for his text, he founds British statesmanship on the largest equity; or when, glaring on anarchy, he inspires modern politics with the whole

gamut of human thought and passion. Let others, on the plea of nearness to our own time and place, be particular to familiarise themselves with the views of people very like themselves,—be content to hear first what Sainte-Beuve has to say of Bossuet and the noble admiration of Gibbon for Tacitus. Let who may exalt the memory of local heroes and frequent the shrines of out-of-the-way saints,—let your eyes follow the helmets of Cæsar and of Clive; may your voices be attuned to the song of her whom all generations have called blessed.

Now I do not propose to offer to you anything by way of exhortation on the avail of culture to individual happiness. That way lies perfection; but the word perfection is high-flown and absolute, and it opens a chapter too long and too high. I have thought that I might address you more usefully, according to the measure of my knowledge, if I said a few frank words about the public value and public duties of disciplined intellect.

If I have at all rightly sketched the qualities of the educated mind, its capacities for the comprehension and furtherance of national interests stand apparent. The greatness of those interests—their complexity—the mingling of the most intricate material concerns with the subtlest spiritual movements—the conflict, and still more the blending, of old and new—the action and reaction between our own country, its colonies, and foreign lands,—all this requires clear and reverent insight. To this vast fabric the “practical man” whips him out and gaily applies the foot-rule of his personal experience. But it is as true now as in the days of Bacon, that, while “expert men can execute and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one,” yet “the general counsels and the plots and the marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned.” Many things are transient and characteristic of only some forms of government; this is permanent and universal. In proportion as the mind of a country is driven away, or withdraws, from interesting itself in the State and serving the State, that country is weakened, and human progress is stunted.

No one, indeed, is so frankly obscurantist as, in terms, to

deny that a man is the better for being highly educated, or, in terms, to assert that affairs of State are best disposed on narrow grounds. Whatever any one may say in his heart, no one says in so many words that thought and knowledge are less well adapted to statecraft than half-knowledge and inaccurate thinking. What is said is rather that, for the practical affairs of life, and particularly of politics, education is apt to bring a certain detachment from the interests and sympathies of common people, and that, although the bond of union among educated people is ennobling, it not the less constitutes them a class. This is partly true; the truth, although relatively a small one, is worth being remembered by way of admonition, and it affects what I have yet to say. The treasure, of course, is in earthen vessels; but, not the less, is its price above rubies.

The true answer, however, to the objection lies deeper. Of the mental habit which I describe as that of culture, it is a characteristic not to overrate education itself. The tendency to do so arises from an incomplete view of the panorama of life,—a blindness to all but those mechanical powers which grind out uniform results. Individual education—the education of school, or of school and college combined—is strong; but other things are stronger,—race, character, religion, sentiment, interest in the past, loyalty to persons, knowledge of the world, business capacity,—above all, the vast accumulated funds of wisdom and guidance which are covered by the invidious term prejudice and the august name of authority. The appreciation of these elements, and especially of their due weight in a civilised community, is a sure criterion of cultivated intelligence.

On the other hand, it is coming to be a note of deficient cultivation to have an unintelligent and inordinate affection for education, and a vast disposition to fuss over its apparatus. Of all the wheels at this moment revolving in Great Britain, the educational wheel carries the largest freight of uninvited flies, although no reliable calculations ascribe any increased velocity to their buzzing. One of the immense pleasures of speaking to my present audience in praise of education is that there is not the remotest chance

of any maladroit amateur "educationist" returning thanks for the cause. But it seemed not unnecessary to clear out of the way the idea that one of the most illiberal of errors is characteristic of culture, before speaking of the proper influence of educated intellect in the State.

Let me say at once that what I invite you to consider is not matter of right or privilege; and, in such discourse, it is before all things necessary to purge the mind of arrogance. I speak of the interests not of the few but of the many. That the intellect of the country ought, in the country's interest, to exercise a guiding influence in its affairs, is a proposition widely different from a claim that, by artificial enactment, a preponderant voice should be given to what are called the educated classes. The "educated classes" are not coextensive with the whole company of thinking men. They are at once wider and narrower. An exceedingly mixed multitude come within that flattering designation "the educated classes"; and the most comprehensive charity will not ascribe to all of these the mental habit which I have endeavoured to describe. Nor would the political apotheosis of some sublimated essence of the educated classes fare better. A former Rector of this University once asked if the country would tolerate the Athenæum Club for a Second Chamber of Legislature. At the risk of incurring the discipline of the Committee of the Club, I answer emphatically, No. The reason is obvious. Isolate, by a stroke of the pen, any set of men you please, on any principle you please, and, to the extent of their isolation, you disable them. Choose your lawgivers on the sole ground of accomplishment in literature and science, and you make an experiment predestined—probably in any country, most certainly in this—to ludicrous failure. Above all, select any body of men for rule on the express ground of intellectual superiority, and they will be intolerably unpopular. All such mechanical contrivances are of the day before yesterday, and, if set up to-night, would vanish before to-morrow's sun.

Diametrically opposite to such courses lie those ambitions for the mind of the country with which I sympathise,—

not in isolation but in fusion. It seems to me that, in the State and in society, the future largely depends on the extent to which those who think and who know accept the conditions of British democracy and contribute their thought and knowledge accordingly. To exercise a formal arbitrament is not the function in national life which in these days is appointed for the educated; it is in their quality of citizens that they must seek to influence events. The rule of the game now is that each man starts by having a vote; but it is no corollary of that rule that the able man shall have no more influence than the other. All start fair; but the law of nature is that the best man has most say in the end. What Gautier called *la stupidité égalitaire* is no condition of British democracy; for freedom expels Equality, which is merely Privilege with a red cap on.

In urging the duty of educated men, I speak not alone of active participation in politics, for more indirect and subtle agencies are at least as potent. But what is required is that, in all available ways, the light of knowledge shall be turned on the path of this self-governing people, and the best aid given by the best minds. Every man's life has its patriotic side; and his responsibility is not lightened, but increased, by the degree of his mental equipment. There is due to the State a tribute, or excise, out of cultivated intellect; and at present I doubt if the State gets its due.

I speak thus because I have, as every one in this country is bound to have, an immense desire for the success of the system of popular government now established among us. That success must depend on the prevalence of reason in its counsels. Now, nothing that I have read in the history of the world implies that British householders need be hostile to reason or disinclined to avail themselves of the best-informed guides. All the historical parallels which are supposed to support the opposite conclusion are, when examined, completely irrelevant. That conclusion is, in fact, derived in the main from certain commonplaces about aristocracy and democracy as two hostile and mutually exclusive systems. Those saws, coming from classical sources, and therefore assumed to contain the beginning and end of

wisdom, and to be indiscriminately applicable, contented the speculation of generations which had little direct interest in the question; and the impression thus created received confirmation in more recent times from the work of De Tocqueville. De Tocqueville passed in his day for the French equivalent of a Whig, and his conclusions are in some regards favourable to democracy; but, so far as concerns the deeper question of the relations of intellectual life to popular government, his opinions are most depressing. I must be pardoned, however, for saying that the philosophical tone and magisterial style of this celebrated writer have invested his book with more authority than can fairly be claimed for its substance. Those parts of the work which are of general application are largely in the air—a rather serious fault in political discussion. They consist, to a great extent, of the authoritative reproduction of old-world abstractions, which can only be universally true if experience has shown that climate, race, tradition, and social custom make no difference in the working of forms of government. They certainly furnish no legitimate ground for concluding or assuming that in Great Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the people will not be led by its best thought, provided only it get the offer of it.

The contrary opinion, the pessimist view, has at least the merit of simplicity. The many, it is said, are ignorant, poor, and selfish, and will overbear the men of light. All this I think highly fallacious. It assumes either that society is wholly disorganised or that the gift of the suffrage has a disorganising effect, which turns the voters into a set of unconnected units. It assumes, in another view, that there is an eternal pitched battle going on between classes on class subjects. All this is flagrantly contrary to the fact. Society is fairly well organised, and the suffrage does not act as a solvent of society. The political conflicts of this country have seldom been class questions, and never were less so than they are at present; and this is the more striking because the people mainly concerned decline to fight, although cordially invited by third parties to do it. Not merely does the battle shift, but good generals, when

they see a fight impending, can often choose their own ground, and ought at all events never to let the enemy choose it.

Again, the pessimists assume that poor people will get their thinking done for them, and will always run to the demagogue to do it. The first part of this proposition is an ungracious way of stating the necessary condition of all popular government; the second depends entirely on the presence or absence of educated men at the post of duty, —and the pessimist assumes their absence. Among our national gods the demagogue seems to me a greatly over-rated bogey. Give him a monopoly, and there is, of course, nobody like him; and, if he has a monopoly, who is to blame? Who but the wise and learned and cultured, who, without any valid ground for believing so, proclaim the game of reason to be up? No one has any inherent preference for bad sense to good sense; and even the taste for bad speaking is entirely an acquired one. Of course I do not mean that if pure intellect, personified, let us say, in some biologist, or, for that matter of it, some jurist, were to walk out of his study into the East End of London, and lift up his testimony in favour of abstract reason, all would listen and none scoff; but then we must not take for granted that he is a good speaker, and his methods might even suggest a doubt of his good sense.

Another objection which I take to the pessimist theory relates to a most interesting phase of modern life. It is, I think, contrary to the fact to say that the individual withers, as the world grows more and more; and our great poet put the words in the mouth of a misanthrope (whose notions on the more familiar subject of marriage have not hitherto passed for gospel). The market may have gone down for many things; but personal prowess is never at a discount. And, of all kinds of virtue, what goes farthest now is exactly what has gone farthest from the beginning of time—Boldness, Boldness, always Boldness. I use the term in its most sterling sense, the power of staying, as well as the power of striking, the power of never minding what people think, if you are in the right. The timidities

of a not very distant age, and certain conventions produced by those timidities, for long muffled the voice of discussion and created a reserve about many truths which are of the essence of national life. It is one of the reassuring signs of the times that plain speaking and courage are increasingly popular.

I have used the general and, I hope, not too invidious term, pessimist, to describe the desponding and disaffected tone about popular government which is possibly not unknown in University circles, and which unquestionably tends to deprive the State of what is its due. Those impressions or assumptions are frequently latent or inarticulate; but they have been plainly expressed in the writings of two publicists of the highest fame—Sir Henry Maine and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. I mention their honoured names because any doctrine advanced in their writings is seen at its best; and what they have said in this sense seems open to every objection which I have stated. It may not be impertinent to add that, although what Sir James Fitzjames Stephen has written is unmistakable in its import and still more in its tone, yet those passages in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* form rather an excursion from the main argument, and in no way affect the general soundness of what, to my thinking, is one of the best books ever written.

I suggest, then, that it is the duty of men of culture to take more part than they do at present in current affairs. To say that they ought to claim their proper place would be an extremely crude way of putting things. They ought not to claim it, but to take it. But they will only get it if they realise the condition, the very natural and quite tolerable condition, of popular government, and more or less of all government,—“If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.”

But it is not alone in the discussion and decision of specific questions, as they arise, that educated men may find useful scope for their powers. What is still more needed



is the creation of a better-informed, more liberal, and more steady public opinion, on political and social questions generally. Were this attained, specific problems would not so often find large sections of the people unprepared for their consideration. At present many things start up, drift about, and get settled anyhow, when events might be moulded and developed beforehand, if pains and brains were applied to them.

One might give illustrations from the past and the irretrievable; I would rather take the instance of a set of questions which are of the present and of the near future. It is surely most desirable that the subject of Socialism should be studied and understood now, before it has got mixed up with party politics. It is an extremely interesting study, and has been admirably elucidated from this University. Yet it scarcely appears that at present much trouble is being taken by educated people generally to form an accurate apprehension of the set of problems which fall under the name. Of all subjects, Socialism must be studied to be understood in its practical proposals and ultimate consequences; and once these are realised, it is seen how essentially Collectivism differs from a mere limitation of the old principle of *laissez-faire*. Yet many well-intentioned people, informed only about the excellent motives of the authors of a system which is nothing if not practical, entirely forget Dr. Johnson's admonition to Boswell on the important article of Freewill and Necessity. In the present day there is such a vast amount of intellectual soft stuff, such a zeal to hold candles to every spirit, dark or bright, all at the same time, that the hard-hearted recommendation to study the subject must mark me out as ultimately destined to the lamp-post. Yet, in extenuation, let it be said that one of the incidental advantages of such reading is that it compels the thoughts to turn to that gaunt figure of poverty whose shadow darkens the land, and must increase a man's desire to help, according to the measure of his powers, towards sound means of mitigation. It will suggest also, perhaps, that the limits of State action are set by no inflexible rule by one generation for another. It

will, above all, inspire that kind of respect, which is akin to amazement, for the boldness of this conception of a new ideal on which to fix the hopes of our race—a State, in which man shall live by bread alone; in which, once for all, the human soul shall be given in exchange for rations;—a State, of which slavery is not merely an institution but the corner-stone; and in which the gates of intellectual freedom are shut for ever on mankind.

I have spoken of remedies for social dangers; and this opens another great sphere of intellectual activity. Can it be said that those problems are at present being thought out with that full devotion of the better mind of the country which the subject demands? I speak not of statesmen but of educated society generally. One of our current fatuities is that these things are for statesmen. Of course they are. But what is to come of the combination of over-driven, over-competing statesmen with an apathetic, unoriginaive, educated class—what but the thing which we see, that statesmen will go further and the country will fare worse? In truth, I hardly think that the strategic importance of such questions is sufficiently realised by those who are interested in intellectual supremacy. In that interest it is indispensable that the strongholds of obscurantism should be sapped; and in this aggressive war the friends of intellectual light and of moral elevation fight side by side. The sulky, envious, and darkened spirit is the chosen home of obscurantism, and it is very largely the product of bad dwellings and bad health,—of bad and too little food, of bad and too much drink.

Now, very likely, philanthropy ought to be sufficiently potent to reduce such evils. But it is not; it can supply a certain head of steam, but very little machinery. Indeed, if the truth be told, Altruism in politics is but a broken reed to lean on. A clever man has very recently spun, in its honour, ingenious tales, in which he has sought to glorify mankind by ascribing to successive governing classes a maudlin and pusillanimous dereliction of power; but good sense is sufficiently vindicated by the contradiction given to such theories by the most palpable facts of the day.

The larger and more truly philanthropic view will regard the interest of the community as a whole ; a stronger if a less fiery zeal will seek to abate the degrading influences which afflict the poor, in order that a freer course may be had for the growth and elevation of national life. Hence it is that the humblest and most mundane improvements in hearth and home all have their place in the war against the foes of intellectual rule.

In speaking of aggressive measures, let me remind you that the advance of applied science and of invention cannot rely upon being unimpeded in an unenlightened community. Mechanical inventions which displace labour are never popular ; and protective legislation, in the wider sense of the term, is not confined to aristocratic government. As already indicated, various of the evils ascribed to democratic institutions do not seem to me to be proved by experience or sound political insight ; but here the danger is not visionary. The safeguards are to be found not merely in the spread of the less complicated truths of political economy, but also in an increased interest in scientific facts and ideas themselves. No one will imagine that I mean that those subjects are to be crammed into a school course. It is the adult understanding that has to be reached ; and it is not by direct or universal instruction that these notions will be instilled into the popular mind. If these ideas are current in society, using the term in its widest sense, it is surprising how quickly they reach comparatively poor people. But the impulse must be given from the best minds ; and with them the duty lies.

There are, and will always be, questions in which reason fights at an enormous disadvantage against cupidity and credulity ; and even the most unsound *argumentum ad crumenam* is bad to beat. But if a man comes to have more interests in life than one,—if other ideas are presented to him which attract him and divert him,—the strain is greatly lessened. It would be difficult to overrate the good which has been done to great masses of the British people in this direction, almost single-handed, by sport. And one of the chief duties of educated people to

their poorer fellows is to reproduce and make common to them, so far as may be, those things, of all and of whatsoever kinds, which enlarge the scope of human action and enhance the elevation of the human soul. Literature, Music, and Painting should be sent out, as it were, to fight their own battle—the battle of civilisation. Doubtless the change, which is already proceeding, will work gradually and slowly downwards. But a sweeter, more cheerful, more amusing life would mould and dispose the popular mind to the accomplishment of a higher and yet higher national destiny.

Haply, the river of Time—  
As it grows, as the towns on its marge  
Fling their wavering lights  
On a wider, statelier stream—  
May acquire, if not the calm  
Of its early mountainous shore,  
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And now I anticipate one criticism of what I have advanced. It will be said that the performance of what I describe as the part of educated men in the State, depends on the prevalence of a high standard of public spirit. To that I assent. Why should there not be such a standard? And if, to the attainment of it, some further effort be required,—where better, and to whom, can an appeal for such effort be made than here and to you?

I have a right to address you, undergraduate members of this great University, as children of the light and children of the day. I do not ask you to rise to heroics; and I should be sorry to see educated men take themselves too seriously. The ghastly spectre of the prig should rise, on every academic gaudy day, to remind us that nothing will do without the saving salt of good sense, and that the appointed rulers of the world are men of the world. But, well within the bounds of sane conduct, there is ample scope for all to do their part by their country. It is an extremely prevalent and far-reaching belief that there exist some impalpable but irresistible currents of destiny, which have practically no relation at all to individual energy, and

will certainly overbear it. Without entering on this vast subject, it is enough for present purposes to say, that men are apt to forget the frequency with which these currents can be and are exaggerated in popular imagination, and can be and are in fact deflected. The propensity to generalise may profitably be corrected by regard to the complete and total disappearance of theories about the larger interests of nations, about peace and war, and about colonies, which, a few decades ago, were regarded as the last cry of progress. Or, if a wider scope of observation be preferred, I am all in favour of increased attention being given to those numerous historical events of crucial importance in which the tide of some tendency has been turned, in which nations have been saved or re-created, by the illustrious virtue of individuals. The annals of such virtue come down to the present day, and the latest hours of the present day. And the ignominious paradox that, as the consummation of progress, this empire is destined to be governed by ignorance, ought to nerve educated men to bring about its refutation.

In what has been said I hope it has been made clear that the personal possession of culture is the condition upon which alone the service of which I speak can be rendered to the State. I seek, therefore, not to divert your attention from those studies to which your time is at present pledged, but rather to suggest another and a nobler reason for their strenuous prosecution. To some of you, in after-life, from lack of opportunity or from different dispositions, there may not arise the occasion for directly affecting public affairs. Be it so. But do not, on that account, lose sight of the State and the ambiguous problems of political progress, as outside the ambit of your influence. There is not an intellectual life well led, not a book well written, not a discovery made, that may not, by some conscious regard to general enlightenment, be invested with a double beneficence.

In addressing you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to whom I owe so much, I should not have chosen a subject related to public rather than individual interests, were it not that, in my view of public interests, individual action bulks so

largely. In the infinite variety of character and gifts, which must be found in nearly three thousand young men and women, imagination can picture and hope would desire a corresponding variety of career. The hero of one of the most striking of French romances had so completely planned out his adventures before he started on them, that he made up his mind what colour of feather should be worn in her hat by the lady whose heart he should win; and the feather and the hat and the lady all duly appeared together. This degree of prescience is not given to all; and it might lessen the interest of existence. Better, perhaps, to covet rather the power to decide, at the time, each of the options of life, according to the bent of character and fitness. Of these things, when all is said and done, a man himself is the best judge. And I hope I shall not offend pastors and masters, or the wise generally, when I say that the opposite plan leaves a good deal of waste material lying about the country.

I have not, in this Address, affected to sermonise you or give you good advice. Yet do not suppose me insensible to the pathos of this great gathering. I go with you, in thought, through the beaten paths of life, and into its green pastures, and by its pleasant waters. We part. With a hope as strong as if I knew each one of you, I desire that all good angels may light your ways and bless your goings.



ADDRESS

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
ALEXANDER HUGH VI<sup>TH</sup> BARON  
BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH

LL.D., ETC.

LORD RECTOR

“UNIVERSITY TRAINING AND NATIONAL CHARACTER”

MARCH 14, 1899





My first duty, and it is a very pleasant one, is to thank those who have placed me in the position which I have the honour to occupy. He would be dull of soul who would not find both inspiration and encouragement amidst the dry and sometimes irksome experiences of public work in being chosen by the free and unsolicited suffrages of you, before whom the world lies, and whose generous appreciation is independent of all the complicated and often biased views that intrude themselves into the struggles and contentions of our daily life. Let me assure you that I prize most highly the great honour you have done me. There is nothing that could stimulate me more effectively to prove worthy of your selection, and believe me, that if I fail to do so, it is not from any lack of appreciation of the compliment you have paid me in placing my name after those which stand in the roll of honour to which your suffrages have called me. These feelings are deepened by the fact that my previous connection with the University of Edinburgh had been but slight. On the other hand, I think I can truly say that the ties I have formed with the University during my tenure of office, and the interest in all its affairs which my duties have awakened, will not cease when I make way for my successor, but will remain a great possession, the pleasure of which time will neither efface nor destroy.

I pause to make only one other preliminary observation. On this occasion I wish to make some reference to one loss which our community has sustained since my election. I allude to the premature removal from amongst us of Mr. J. R. Hunter.<sup>1</sup> My knowledge of him was acquired in con-

<sup>1</sup> President of the Union.

nection with the affairs of your Union, in the management of which he took a prominent part. The place which he enjoyed in the confidence of his fellow-students, the energy and interest which he brought to bear on the management of the affairs entrusted to him, led many of those who knew him best to prophesy for him a bright and honourable career in after life; and there must be many here who mourn the loss of one whose friendship they greatly valued.

I feel—I deeply feel—my own unfitness to address an academic audience such as this. My life and experience have lain in the engrossing round of public business, pressed in by the imperious necessity of studying affairs in the concrete, which is so apt to blind us to the purer light of science, of learning, and of that abstract truth which shines with a calm serenity, too often banished from the daily experience of a practical life.

If I cannot rise to the heights which your younger and fresher eyes discern in the future, do not suppose that I despise the view, or fail to estimate aright its glories and its inspiration. But I feel that I have little to teach you in such associations, and that at your daily life at this great University you have guides and teachers with whom it is impossible for me to enter into comparison.

But in recognition of the honour you have done me, it is my purpose to address you a few words to-day on some aspects of University life, and to endeavour to tell you how these present themselves to me, and how they appear to one who strives to estimate their value as a national force.

In no sphere of life are ideas more active and more expansive than in the University life of to-day. It keeps its eyes fixed on every new realm that is to be conquered or annexed. It knows no timidity of aim, no slowness of effort. It is stimulated by a healthy spirit of rivalry and of emulation. Do not suppose that I came amongst you to preach to you the necessity of curbing your aims, or of bringing down your ideals to the common things of daily life. It is rather we men of action and of business who

have to learn from you, and we would fain borrow from you some of the energy that has displayed itself in those scenes amidst which you are spending some years of your life, years which will be to you not the least enjoyable, and which will have an influence upon your future second to none.

The subject on which I propose to speak to you to-day is National Character, and the function of the Universities in forming that character, and in preserving, developing, and strengthening it.

What then is the distinctive feature of our national character? We pride ourselves upon it. We are grateful for its achievements. We feel it to be the link that, amidst all our differences, gives us a bond of brotherhood that we would not willingly see decay.

I venture to quote a sentence from the speech which Lord Salisbury made in proposing the toast of the evening, at the dinner given at the Mansion House in November last, in honour of Lord Kitchener and the British and Egyptian forces.

"We do not reflect on it, yet if we have any insight into the administrative processes that go on in various parts of the Empire, we cannot help being impressed by the fact that numbers on numbers of educated young men who at home in this country would show no very conspicuous qualities, except those we are accustomed to look for in an English gentleman, yet if thrown on their own resources, and bidden to govern and control and guide large bodies of men of another race, they never, or hardly ever, fall short of the task which has been given to them; but they will make of that material splendid regiments, by which our Empire is extended and sustained."

Now I know that it is often said that we incur the derision of foreigners by the pride to which I have referred. But are we wrong to cherish it? There is no doubt a pride which is self-flattery, which degenerates into conceit and narrow-mindedness, which makes men blind to the achievements and unsympathetic to the aims of those around them, and which makes them ridiculous in the eyes

of others. I am not prepared to say that we, as a nation, may not sometimes be guilty of that pride. But there is another pride which inspires only a strong sense of high and helpful comradeship, which cherishes in us a deep sense of responsibility, which fences us in against all that is degrading and unworthy, which forgets self in the common love and reverence for country, and which steels us to endurance and to sacrifice for that country's sake. It is a pride that is inspired by calm courage, but is tempered also by a humble reverence, and has no relation to—

Such boasting as the Gentiles use,  
Or lesser breeds without the Law.

Have we not, in calmly judging the achievements of our race in the past, and its efforts to prove itself worthy of those achievements in the present, have we not a right to say that our nation possesses certain distinctive qualities of which we do well to be proud, and in which our pride is an inspiring and not a foolish thing?

Have we not grown from the age of small things by a cautious courage and a spirit of prudent adventure?

Have we not been ready to hide our differences and to draw closer together in moments of a common danger; when events have disappointed us, have we not learnt to shape ourselves to new circumstances, to accept the inevitable with courage and with a common-sense which goes far to redeem nearly every mistake?

Have we not known as a nation how to adhere to certain ideals, to admire great aims and pure lives, and while steadily pursuing what was practically expedient, at the same time never to lower the flag of principle, or to tamper as a nation with base means?

Have we not shown, in spite of all who would decry our national selfishness, that we can make our rule a synonym for prosperity to subject races, and that in our dealings with them we can maintain justice as the guiding star in every department of our administration?

Will any one who has studied our national history not admit that it is an upward progress, from which, so far as

the conscience of the nation could achieve it, tyranny, corruption, and injustice have gradually been banished?

Have we not shown that we were ready "to take up the white man's burden" in every corner of the world, and have we not a right and a duty to maintain our pride in the achievements of our countrymen in every land and in every clime—achievements not least worthy when they were the result of lonely, dreary, and often neglected and unnoted labour?

Have we not as a nation striven to recognise our responsibilities, and does not the conviction of this prove helpful for all of our individual lives as a bulwark of conscience and of duty?

Now, ladies and gentlemen, on what does this national character rest? What has gone to form it, and to what does it owe its preservation?

National character is sometimes spoken of as if it were a matter of temperament due to racial peculiarities, a matter of inheritance and of tradition, coming to us we hardly know how or when, preserved without any help of our own, something which we receive as the rich man's heir inherits his wealth, or as the descendant of a long line accepts as a matter of course his pride of birth. We accept it as an accident, and regard ourselves as inheriting something which we can neither add to nor impair.

I venture to say that this is not a sound theory, and I am certain that it is not a safe one.

That it is not a sound one a very little examination will convince us. Before we accept it, let us ask how many varieties of race are comprised within these little islands. Let us think how varied are our traditions, how many are our diversities of temperament, of condition, of idea, and of interest; how sharply we are divided in religious matters, in opinion, in experience, and in occupation.

Look how many changes have been wrought, and how difficult it must have been for tradition and inheritance to have preserved identity throughout all these changes by their own unaided force.

We may be "the heirs of all the ages," but our inherit-

ance is one which is shaped by each generation, for it is and it must be preserved by an effort of will and an intellectual discipline which are far more powerful than any mere reflected influence from the generations that are gone before.

But I say, with even more confidence, that it is not a safe theory. It makes national character merely an accidental environment, out of which we cannot escape. It deprives us of our power of self-criticism, and prevents us from discerning when national character may become strained, perverted, or exaggerated. It leads us to think that we must accept each mood and temperament as if it was something that we must blindly obey; as if we must take pride in it only because it is ours, and think lower of ourselves if we feel compunction at some of its manifestations. I do not desire that we should pique ourselves on our superiority to other nations, or to find in them any object-lesson for our own glorification. But if we look abroad may we not find some striking instances of this feeling—times when a most gifted and brilliant nation is driven into a blind infatuation by a sort of fetish worship of their inherited tradition, which leads them to exaggerate their own peculiarities, and to make an idol of that which they bow before as the instinct of their nationality.

What then is the inference I would seek to draw from this? Is it not that national character is not a mere instinct or tradition—not only a dominating temperament—but a matter of intellectual and moral discipline, to the application of which we may—*may, must*—attend, and for which we are, each in our own place, individually responsible? We must have some guiding, ruling, and directing star, some power which may be cherished and developed, if we are not to identify national character with a mere blind and unthinking instinct or impulse; if we are to preserve self-knowledge and self-government; if we are to hold up before our eyes a mirror of ourselves; and if we are to achieve—as, if our future is to be equal to our past, we *must* achieve—a calm and steady power of comparison, of self-judgment, and of self-discernment. On that

foundation we must build, if the edifice is to stand firm and sure.

I suggest that this foundation is to be found in that sort of discipline for which no agency can be so powerful as that of University life rightly understood. The Universities are really shrines, which the slow-working wisdom of the nation, and the long experience of centuries, have established to be the guiding lights of intellectual progress, and to be the centres of our highest intellectual endeavours. Such shrines as these may have taken various forms. We choose to call them Universities. They have grown from various beginnings, and have shaped themselves under the stress of various circumstances. Every civilised nation has formed such shrines, bridging over the space between the discipline of the school and the battlefield which lies before you in active life on the other side of the stream. Some of these institutions have grown up under the shadow of the Mediæval Church, and under the guardianship of religious orders. Others have owed their existence to royal and noble patronage; some, like our own, to the wisdom of commercial men, and to municipal patriotism. Sometimes in past ages they have formed the chosen homes of those who sought to separate themselves from the active pursuits of life, in calm and cloistered solitude. Elsewhere, and at other times, they have grown up as the choice retreats of privilege and ease, and have surrounded themselves with a halo of exclusiveness. But everywhere their vital importance has impressed itself upon the minds of rulers, and upon the feeling of nations. Nowhere have they been disregarded or treated as things of little moment, however ill-assorted they might seem in their antiquarian aspect with the imperious needs of the active modern world. In other countries they have sometimes been seized by the cast-iron hand of a grasping despotism, and have had their vitality crushed out of them by mechanical uniformity. It is an enormous advantage for us that they have been shaped by our nation for its own needs; that they have been adopted as a national inheritance; that they are weather-stained by every storm that has vexed our history,



and that out of all this stress and strain they have grown up as products of the soil, and nurseries of national spirit from which all trace of exclusiveness is banished, and which are open to every wind that blows. May I not call them the active hives from which swarms have spread into every corner of our national life? Look back a few generations and you will find the Universities regarded as the training places of a few professions, as the exclusive homes of a few studious men. What was thought or done in them, had to be interpreted by other minds and by other pens in order to be read by the world at large. But with the Scottish Universities sooner than any others, the bond between them and the national life became a real and an active one. Who would recognise Scotland of last century without her Universities? Where would Edinburgh have been without that centre of keen intellectual life that united so much of her energies in the University, and made her then humble abode—so different from the splendid surroundings amidst which we meet to-day—the attraction towards which students thronged from every nation in Europe?

It was owing to these things that the air of the Scottish Universities became so bracing, that their sympathies became so wide, and that, like the character in Terence, "being human, nothing human was deemed alien by them." It was this that extended their curriculum, that made them not merely the home of the recluse student, but places of equipment for the denizens of active life; and it is this which has made them so vast and potent an agency in the preservation and development of national character.

The influence of that bond between our national life and our Universities has been of mutual benefit. I am quite well aware that this is an aspect of the Universities apart from their influence as places for the intellectual discipline of those who are to be soon immersed in the active pursuits of life. Some will hold that they should be first and foremost places of learning and research. Far be it from me to depreciate this function, that of keeping alive the pure light of science, of speculation, and of learning, and of seeking to maintain that light unassailed by

the more sordid aims of a bustling and hurrying world. To accomplish this is the pride and honourable privilege of a University, and we need have no fear that it will be neglected. We may indeed devoutly hope that pious and liberal-minded founders may appear in increasing numbers to supply the means without which that function cannot be discharged. But I feel that it is for others far more qualified than myself to develop and insist upon this aspect of the University. What I would desire to do is to urge how much need there is for an intellectual training as the soundest and most essential foundation for national character; how easily without it that national character may dwindle and decay; how unrivalled are the opportunities of the Universities for supplying the want; and how purblind and prejudiced is the view that looks upon the Universities as places which are divorced from life's activities, instead of the recruiting depots from which the armies of practical life are to be reinforced.

Is it really the case that the life you lead here, the pursuits in which you are for a few years immersed, are nothing more than means by which you may pass a few examinations, obtain a few credentials of acquirement, and then proceed to dispose of them in the best market which may be open to your wares? By all means garner your own acquisitions, and make the best of your time. But do not forget that the nation too has an interest in what you, upon whom the burden of the future will soon lie, gather not only as individuals, but as a great army of recruits, within these walls, and from the spirit of your *Alma Mater*. Here you imbibe the ardour of high intellectual aim; you have your eyes fixed on lofty ideals; you strain your efforts to master intellectual difficulties. You discern here something of the "fairly tales of science and the long results of time," and you learn to watch them shaping themselves in one harmonious march of solid development. Here you link age to age by the study of the great thinkers of all time, and by the lessons of history you learn how "one increasing purpose runs through the ages." Before the sterner and more grim realities of the world engross you

you have time to catch the music of the poets, and to appreciate the vast force that they have wielded in the affairs of men. Will not all this equip you for the duties of citizenship even better than any special training however valuable in its way? Will it not help you as members of a new generation, with all its immense destinies, and all the struggles and responsibilities that lie before it, to meet these destinies and encounter those responsibilities with a national character strengthened, developed, and buttressed by intellectual training, and preserved at once and alike against either exaggeration or decay. Will you not be enabled to rise to the vast burdens of Empire, to feel its grandeur, to rise to new enthusiasm for its great possibilities, and to new devotion to its service? Does not such a training make a backbone of national character, altogether independent of mood and temperament, or even of hereditary bias?

This is the aspect of University life which, with all humility, I desire to bring before you at this time. I am aware that it is not the only aspect, not, it may seem to many, the most important or the most academic aspect of that life. If it is an obvious one, and one which involves little knowledge of technicalities, it is the more fitting to be the theme of one who intrudes upon academic circles, the judgment of public life, and who, as regards the mysteries of University organisation, aspires to learn rather than to instruct. But it is one to which the nation, I am certain, attaches immense importance, and to which are largely due the free and popular ideas which inspire our Scottish Universities. Of this I feel sure, that however it may appear within the walls of the Universities themselves, it is one of great national importance. It is a distinct gain to our national life that so many, by means of University training, step quickly and with all the fervour of energy and youth upon them, into leading positions in public life. This is more the case, perhaps, in our own country than in any other. Elsewhere men may make their way through the harsh school of experience, and all the hard discipline in life, which dull their energy and quench the fire of their enthusiasm. In the process, dry

lessons of drudgery have to be learned, and ends have to be shaped by the rough contact of the world. Ideals grow dim, aspirations become less ardent, and service, it may be feared, less spontaneous and less generous. May our Universities keep up for ever the supply of trained and disciplined, but young and vigorous life, to compensate the heavy weight that clings about our feet, that dims the keenness of our forward going as we advance along the well-trodden path that brings us all to weariness at last.

But yours, happily, is not the weariness that comes with time and experience. Yours it is to shape with enlightened intelligence the national character as it shall develop itself in the next generation, because national character may vary, not only according to country and people, but also with each generation. It may preserve its identity, but it undergoes changes, and we must learn to understand, not only what it is, but what it is likely to become; and what can help you more in acquiring this lesson than the training which you are obtaining here, not alone in the formal studies of your University, but in the happy contact of your own minds in social intercourse in your intellectual societies, and I will add, not least in your association for games and athletic exercises of various kinds. I value these for the healthy spirit of emulation which they produce, for the power of organisation which goes along with them, perhaps above all, for their power of teaching men to strive with all their might for the success of their cause, for the sake of that cause, and for their own success, without any desire to press their advantage unduly, or to find any pleasure in the defeat or humiliation of an opponent. You gain, in a word, by all the strength and inspiration that comes from being members of a great corporate body such as this. These ideas are finely expressed in some noble lines, published, I believe, last year for the first time, which take the form of an address to one about to enter a great public school. He is supposed to be the son of a soldier who had perished in his country's cause, and part of the appeal made to him is in these words :—

To set the cause above renown,  
To love the game beyond the prize,  
To honour while you strike him down  
The foe that comes with fearless eyes.

To count the life of battle good,  
And dear the land that gave you birth,  
And dearer yet the brotherhood  
That binds the brave of all the earth.

To-day and here the fight's begun,  
Of the great fellowship you're free ;  
Henceforth the school and you are one,  
And what you are the race shall be.

God send you fortune : yet be sure,  
Among the lights that gleam and pass ;  
You'll live to follow none more pure  
Than that which glows on yonder brass.

"Qui procul hinc," the legend's writ—  
The frontier-grave is far away—  
"Qui ante diem periit,  
Sed miles, sed pro patria."

Such is the spirit that will animate your life here if you are to take your part in shaping the national character during the next generation.

What is that character to be ?

If we look back a little more than a hundred years, what a strange contrast we shall see. Scotland was then to a large extent cut off from the rest of the Empire ; it was looked upon with senseless jealousy by our southern neighbours ; it was regarded by them as an uncouth and unintelligent land, separated by literature, by social conditions, by political sympathies, and almost by language from Southern Britain. Yet, after all, it partook very largely of the spirit which characterised the eighteenth century in England as well as elsewhere. That was the century, as we are accustomed to regard it, of convention and restraint, of aristocratic privilege and formal opinions. But amidst all its formalities and convention, the lightning gleams of satire and wit were not invisible. A man of foresight could easily see that these gleams of satire would

spread and become popular; that self-satisfied complacency would suffer a rude shock, and that the restraint of convention would ere long be burst. That awakening came with the French Revolution. That strange mixture of high purpose and reckless iconoclasm attracted all the ardent spirits of the age, and carried them along for a time by its enthusiastic impulse; but its exaggerations became more and more apparent, it spent its force in convulsive changes, which seemed to sweep before them all the landmarks of the past, and to break down the bulwarks of reverence and of social order. We were saved from its excesses, saved perhaps by the very stress of the time, which made us pass through a period of great national effort against overwhelming dangers and, from that experience the national character emerged changed and transformed. It left us free for wide and far-reaching political and social reforms, it created an almost exaggerated respect for popular ideals. It inspired great classes both in England and in Scotland with a new and firm faith in their own power and in their own merits. But after all the changes seemed to many observers to be limited and superficial, to leave unsolved some of the deepest problems which concerned humanity, to be an insufficient settlement of the gravest intellectual and moral questions that could penetrate a nation's life. After all these reforms Carlyle was still found to denounce his age as the age of shams and of cant. He found no satisfaction in the political changes that embraced the middle classes, but left great masses still untouched, and seemed content to accept a degraded lot as the necessary fate of vast numbers of the people.

As years went on we learned by hard experience that peace was not secured, that commercial prosperity was not the whole life of the nation, and that even it was not to be preserved without efforts like those which our ancestors made to build up our Empire. Slowly it may be, but surely the nation rose to its new task. It learnt the hard lesson that no millennium of peace and plenty had dawned, and that its great inheritance was only to be preserved as

it had been won—by labour and by heroic effort; that its basis was to be broadened, and that a bold and generous trust in the people would find its reward in new national stability. We have not perhaps the self-satisfaction that characterised the nation in the middle of this century. We do not accept maxims of any creed or party with such implicit confidence that they are the “be all” and “end all” of political wisdom. But surely we have widened the range of our charity. We have learned to appreciate mutually the feelings that animate different classes. We share more freely the pride that becomes the subjects of an Empire that owes its greatness not to any one class nor to any one generation, but to the combined efforts of all, and to the successive achievements of long ages; and above all, have we not learnt more truly and more earnestly to appreciate our responsibilities, and to feel that as citizens of a great Empire each of us may be called upon to gird up his loins and to strain his best faculties in her service. And does not this explain how many of the young men we see around us undistinguished in ordinary life from the common crowd, as Lord Salisbury said in the passage which I have just quoted, can yet rise to great duties and great responsibilities, and can help to rule our subject races in the unselfish spirit of British justice?

Again, does not this same spirit explain some examples of which we are all proud? In one generation we have an Arnold striving to rear a manly truth-loving race of Englishmen, going about his daily work, preparing his daily lessons with infinite care, keeping that object always before him. In another we have Livingstone, toiling “to heal the great open sore of the world,” thinking himself neglected by those at home, but nevertheless doing each day’s march as manfully as the last.

And let us not forget how much we owe to the gracious example of the throne and to the beneficent influence of the lady to whom all our hearts go out in loving enthusiasm, towards whom any vestige of disloyalty hides itself like a thing abashed; who shares her joys and sorrows with all the countless millions of her subjects, and who for more

years than any sovereign of whom history tells, has been to them a beacon light of all that is at once most gentle, most wise, and most bounteous in sympathy. Surely when the future historian comes to write the annals of our time, he will dwell with careful and grateful pen over that benign influence, which above all hidden currents and all the tendencies which a historian can trace, has fixed upon more than two generations by personal example, something of the ennobling reflection shed by her own character, and has made the name of our sovereign a synonym for all that is loftiest and purest in the ideals of our age.

We often hear the complaint that this is an age of little reverence and restraint, that our ideas are vague and unsettled, that we are recklessly enamoured of change, and that we are careless whither we are moving. I venture to suggest that much that we may deem irreverence is only the exuberance of newly asserted liberty; that it is the froth upon the surface, which leaves undisturbed the calm depths below. We know not what this new century so soon to open upon us has in store for our country, but may it not be that the spirit of restlessness and disquietude, of vague and impatient questioning, of rash and unthinking opposition to authority, may settle down into steadfastness of purpose. I would fain hope that this may be so; but whether it is to be so or not must be mainly decided by the steadfast concentration of national character. And if that national character is to preserve its identity and its strength, it must rest upon trained and disciplined intellectual force. May the Universities contribute their share to this in the future as they have done in the past; and may your training—largely your self-training here—prepare you to take your part in shaping the destinies of the nation.

This must be the prayer of us all; and it is a prayer that concerns not you alone, but all that is most valuable in the life and work of our country.



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